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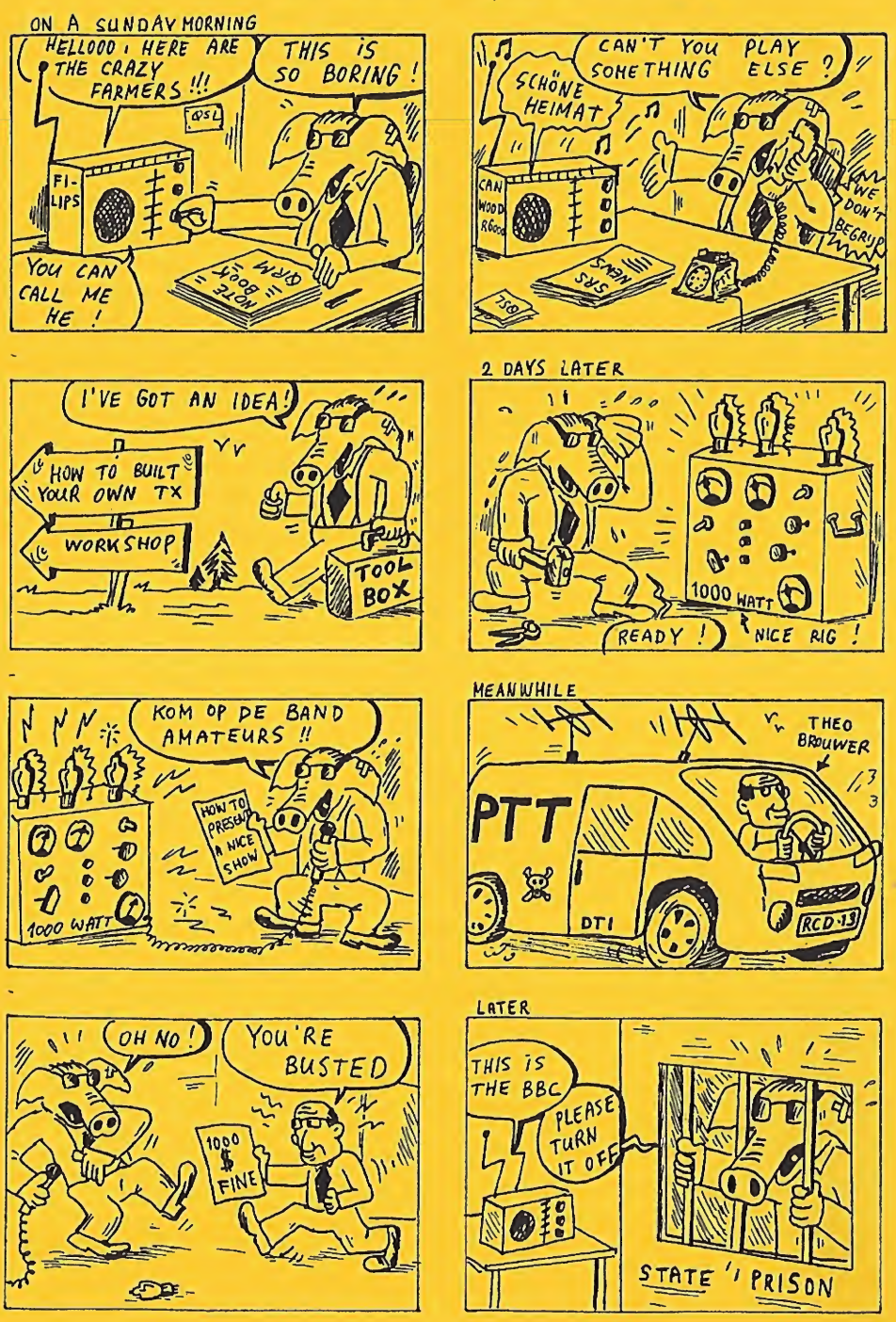

PIRATE CONNECTION #19

May 1999

Radio May Day, Radio, 1992

FINNISH PIRATE RADIO DURING TWO DECADES

Noordzee FM

Radio Northsea

RAIDED

DETAILED REPORT INSIDE

Offshore '98

A Visit To The Farmers

Pirate Connection

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This magazine focuses on land-based Free Radio in Europe and offshore. The material published is entirely dependent on our reader's contributions and everyone is therefore welcome to send in stories or features on anything that relates to unauthorised, illegal broadcasting or offshore radio.

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By Stefan Printz

Editorial

Pirate Connection is back on the Free Radio scene, can you believe it? It's been one and a half years since our last issue. The tragicomical about the delay is that I have had most of the material ready since last autumn, but work, studies and other things have been aggravating circumstances and have forced me to postpone the publication over and over again. I will try to get things turn back to normal and head for a twice a year periodicity of this mag. I hope there will be enough confidence left so that you as subscribers and as regular writers keep on sending in your contributions. My simple and straight wish is that you will give me a second chance.

With this issue, I hope to set a new starting-point for Pirate Connection and my hope is to put more energy into the different activities in order to boost the interest and put the mag into the light limelight where it actually belongs... To give you some tangible ideas, I would like to mention a forthcoming face-lift of our Web pages (which are soon to be moved to a place where I more easily can update the pages) and publication in electronic format on the Web. I also intend to attend the yearly Merchweiler meeting in July, the primary reason just being to have a good time (of course!), but with a second reason to heavily promote the mag and show the world of Free Radio that we still are a source of information to take into account. I hope these efforts will keep the mag as strong as it ever has been, and most importantly, that we can involve more people in our activities – in particular in the mag itself.

My good friend Hans of **Radio Torenvalk** recently coined a phrase about the German pirate stations following the hoax of Level 48, called "**Level 24**". He said: "If the Germans can't make war, they make war with themselves." One of the involving German stations I spoke with was very upset about the hoax and the things that had been said, and advised me not to write anything about it, just silence the whole story. However, the word is free and I have never been a person afraid of saying things that might be unpleasant to certain people. To some extent I can understand their feelings, but regardless of what was being said in the Level 24 broadcast, it was only a matter of making fun of the Level 48 network and nothing to take serious. As far as I have understood, there were no threats, harassment or anything like that. Once again, the Germans have manifested an extremely childish behaviour and the quote from Hans is indeed a pertinent description of the war in the sandpit.

Another recent dispute is the **Farmers From Holland** and their reckless habits on shortwave. There is an unwritten rule in the world of piracy, not to intentionally interfere with any other station and to check that a frequency is free before occupying it. Throughout the years, this has worked surprisingly well, even if there have been occasional incidents. However, the Farmers seem to becoming a big exception and a station that is not willing to obey this rule, but rather set their own rules. On Sunday February 21st, Spaceman was broadcasting on 6284 kHz, when the Farmers hit the

same channel. Either they didn't check the band before or they did, but didn't bother about it. Let's at least hope that it wasn't the latter scenario... Even if we know that the Farmers are regular on 6284 kHz, it doesn't simply give them the right to use the frequency without checking if anybody else is on the band. Since we know that Spaceman also is a powerhouse station, the result of it all was a big mess and two losers. The two signals interfered with each other and I preferred to tune in and enjoying other stations on the band... Spaceman got very upset of course, so did we at PC, and we have asked for an explanation from the Farmers. Spaceman said he would take revenge, but let's hope his feelings calm down a bit and that a second war on the shortwave bands, this time between Dutch stations (!), is prevented.

These two stories are good examples when a harmless hobby has turned into uncomfortable schisms between stations. In my idealistic world, Free Radio is supposed to show the rest of the world that the stations are peaceful, sensible and protect the right of free speech in all types of media. And above all, show that Free Radio is able to work! There are always black sheep in all associations, societies or whatever it might be. Therefore we must never forget to raise our voices and protest when such forces stain the good reputation and all the good things that our hobby stands for!

I have had many ironic comments about my many promises about the printing of this issue. Well, eventually here's my response. Even though I told myself not to make any more promises, here's another one: it won't take another one and a half years to the next issue! See ya all again then, but I do hope we meet before in Merchweiler!

Stefan

PIRATENNEWS

A new edition of Martin Schöch's gigantic Pirate Radio Address List is now available, containing the addresses and other valuable information of all shortwave and mediumwave pirates world-wide from 1993 until today.

The list with small fonts (20 pages) is yours for 5 DM, 3 USD, 20 SEK or 3 IRC's. Outside Europe: 8 DM, 5 USD or 4 IRC's.'

The list with large fonts (30 pages) costs 7 DM, 4 USD, 30 SEK or 4 IRC's. Outside Europe: 12 DM, 7 USD or 6 IRC's.

'Web in' for checking samples of the list!

E-mail: shoechi@gmx.de.
Web: http://www.swl.net/swl-de/swl-pir.htm.

Caught in the Act

Radio Northsea International's raid on April 5th, 1999

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Every pirate knows this nightmare, getting raided during a live broadcast, caught right in the act. That's what happened to ***Mike Anderson*** *at the end of the Easter weekend 1999. His station Radio Northsea International (RNI) was raided on April 5th by the German radio investigators of the* ***Regulierungsbehörde für Telekommunikation und Post****.*

At 10.00 hrs CEST RNI commenced its Easter Monday transmission on 6210 kHz. Northsea also ran a second outlet on FM 101.4 MHz that day, but the shortwave broadcasts made the authorities knock on Mike's door. The Konstanz officers of the Regulierungsbehörde informed their colleagues in Darmstadt (who were closer to the site) about the transmission. In the morning they didn't know that a station called RNI existed at all. It is not known yet if there was a complaint by another user of the 48 metre frequency spectrum that caused the action.

At exactly 16.41 hrs CEST it happened. Radio Northsea had been on the air for almost 7 hours and was just 19 minutes away from its scheduled sign-off when the bell rang. Two policemen and two members of the Regulierungsbehörde were at the door of the house where the transmitters were located. After a brief discussion with the officers Mike's mother let the unexpected visitors in. Her son was presenting a live show when the officers entered the studio. "They behaved friendly", Mike tells. "I was asked several times not to regard the raid as a personal insult." The radio investigators said they just had their job to do.

Mike was even allowed to say good-bye to his listeners and to send regards to the colleagues from Konstanz. Then the transmitters were switched off and confiscated. Apart from the shortwave transmitter (worth DEM 1000) the officers took the FM rig (DEM 500) as well as the RDS coder (DEM 600). Everything else such as studio equipment or aerials were left untouched.

This was the first time that Mike Anderson was caught by the radio investigators. Radio Northsea International will continue, he says, but using relays. Meanwhile, Mike is waiting for the prosecution to proceed.

According to the German telecommunication laws passed in 1996, the illegal use of frequencies is not a criminal offence anymore. However, with fines up to a few thousand DEM imposed, pirate broadcasting can be a very expensive hobby.

A visit to the Farmers

Torenvalk Teknik
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THE NETHERLANDS

We planned to visit the Farmers because we were really eager to know what was happening in their studio. We knew from their crazy announcements that there must be a party going on every Sunday. A date was set on the phone and we were welcome to come over.

The Farmers' house in Zwolle.

Doctor Tim, Mr. Charlie (Radio Perfekt), **Mike Anderson** (Radio Noordzee) drove all from Germany and arrived at my house in the morning. After *Kaffee mit Kuchen*, which is the Doctor's main food, we drove to Zwolle which took us about 1 hour from Zeddam.

We had the car marked so everybody would promptly recognize us.

In Zwolle we took the wrong road and after a telephone-call with the Farmers, we were picked up at a large roundabout in the middle of the town.

We arrived at their studio which is situated in the middle of the town! This was really amazing because we reckoned that their huge transmitter would cause a lot of interference with the neighbours.

We were given a big welcome and invited into their house. We noticed that everything in this house is dedicated to Free Radio. The kitchen was more like a beer and coffee-bar with hundreds of (polka) records laying in every corner and the living room was rebuilt and had a studio in the middle of it. Half a dozen people were present in this house (all family we guess), all of whom being big Free Radio fans and of course the transmitter was switched on and the programme was running. Everyone of us was invited to take place behind the mixer and make a live programme.

We said to the Farmers that their signal is among the strongest (if not the strongest) of the Free Radio stations in Europe and they told us that their transmitter runs a humble 100 watts using one valve RS1003.

Doctor Tim (right) behind the mixer and Mr. Charlie (left).

The reason why there was no interference with the neighbourhood we soon discovered. In their house, there was only a small FM transmitter (100 milliwatts or so) and this signal was picked up some 10 km away where it was put into the real transmitter that runs on the well known frequency of 6300kHz. Of course that transmitter is situated on a secret location and we did not get to see it (very wise).

The car.

The Farmers displayed a great amount of hospitality giving us plenty of beer and other drinks, some snacks etc. and we had a great time chatting about Free Radio and other things.

Of course the subject of Dutch and polka music was brought up and this is the opinion of the Farmers: 'There is far too much foreign (English) music played on the official radio stations, and a lot of Dutch people, especially in the northern and eastern region, don't care too much about this music, that is the main reason why there are so many pirate stations in Holland. Imagine if the official radio stations in England would only play music in the Dutch language, then piracy in England would surely be booming". So what they are saying is, although you may discuss about the quality of the music that theyplay, you can't disagree with the fact that a lot of Dutch people like this type of music.

The QSL of Farmers from Holland which is now possible to receive thanks to the QSL-manager Martin Sievers.

In the late afternoon we drove home again bearing a memory of a couple of people who are all 100% dedicated to Free Radio.

Radio Torenvalk & Radio Tonair

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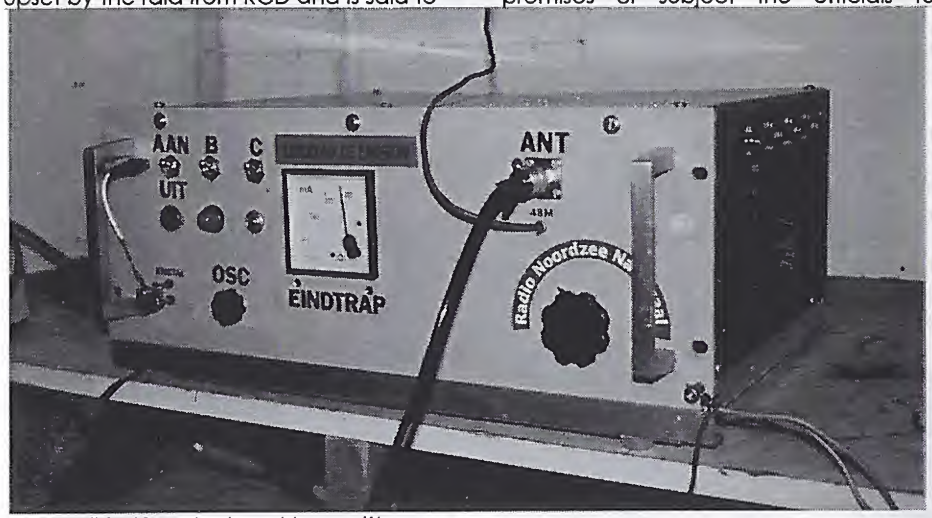
It is always interesting to visit Free Radio stations. The technical solutions are very individual and the programming policies can be very personal. This time I visited Radio Torenvalk and Radio Tonair in the east of the Netherlands. A famous station from this part of the country was Radio Orang Utan that for many years operated on MW and 48 metres. Unfortunately has Freddy been very upset by the raid from RCD and is said to be a nervous wreck today. This has not happened to Torenvalk or Tonair as they have kept a low profile in their area and not upset anybody. Radio Torenvalk has been operating successfully since the summer of 1977. Radio Control Dienst has been active in the area. Music stations on FM have been closed down. Torenvalk points out there is no reason to make it hard for RCD to enter the premises or subject the officials to



Torenvalk's 48 metre band transmitter.

humiliations. It is better to give them a cup of tea and speak nicely with them. Then you might only lose the transmitter and not the studio and record collection. In The Netherlands an operator can be caught three times before the he risks a term in jail. Torenvalk mentioned that the operators of Farmers from Holland are a big family so each time they are raided they state a different family member is the owner of the transmitter. They might be raided up to twenty times before anybody will be sent to jail. Farmers are very friendly and will gladly accept visitors. Unfortunately responding to letters is not any of their greatest achievements. Letters are piled up but remain unanswered. They even got a report from Australia and just commented on the air "Thank you for your letter". No big deal! Back to drinking beer...

Technical excellence

Radio Torenvalk operates from a barn with a 200 watt crystal controlled transmitter on the 48 metre band feeding a half-wave dipole antenna. Torenvalk stays in the sub-band 6250 – 6290 kHz, which he considers a safe portion of the 48 metre band. On the 76 metre band a 10 watt PLL-controlled transmitter is used feeding a vertical antenna. Radio Torenvalk has sold several transmitters and has dropped medium wave several years ago.

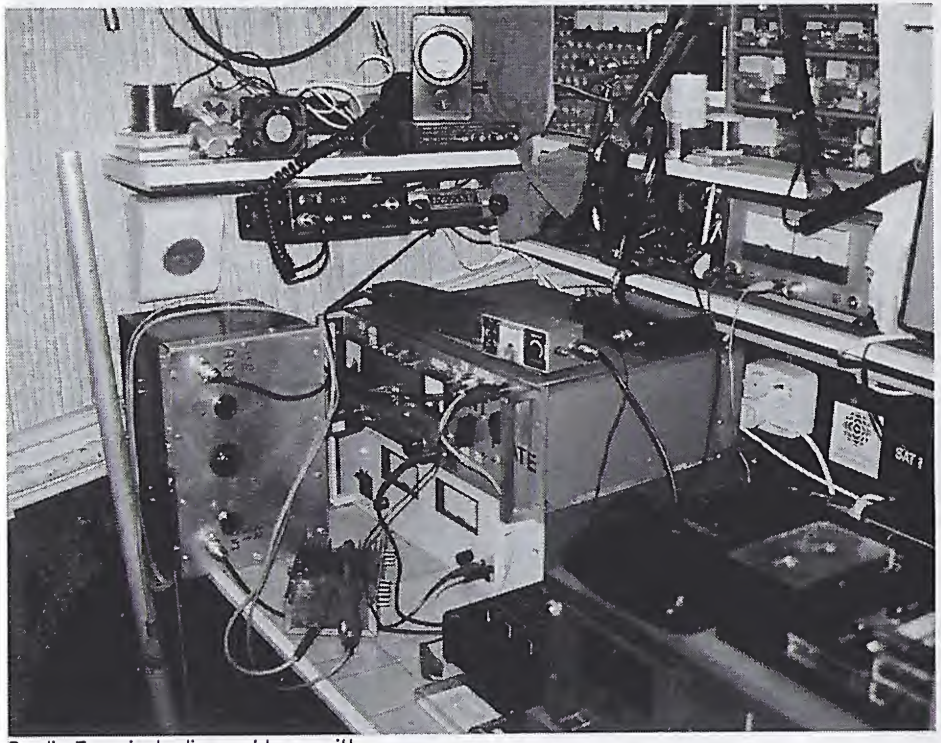
Some of the technical equipment in the test bench.

Torenvalk Teknik is also building excellent MW loop antennas using old solid wood frames with a very nice look. The operator is fond of using tubes wherever possible and is thus called Doctor Tube. Even the cassette deck in the studio is fitted out with tubes! The station has also an own method of putting a signal on the air, as there is no modulator in the transmitters. Instead the signal from the mixer is fed into the transmitter in a stage immediately after the oscillator. This gives a normal AM modulated signal. It is not any kind of phase modulation. There is no modulation transformer in the transmitter. In a traditional transmitter a transformer is normally used to align the impedance between the different stages.

Due to rising postal cost many Dutch stations are giving up their P.O. Boxes now. Torenvalk plan together with Tonair and a few other stations to operate a common maildrop.

Torenvalk is a keen collector of vintage tube receivers with wooden varnished cabinets. In his technical room he has a great collection of receivers in top condition, all of them in working order. He has also a very sensitive Russian communications receiver working with miniature tubes. He also has a Wandel/Goltermann TTPM-43 communications receiver that works on ultra-longwave down to 10 kHz. For testing purposes he also uses a Rhode & Schwartz signal generator. Torenvalk offer his knowledge in building antennas, radios, preselectors and noise reducing devices to anybody interested. Torenvalk is also very interested in Sweden and is learning Swedish by reading cartoon books called "Staffans stollar".

His colleague at Radio Tonair is now also concentrating his efforts to short wave. This station is based in a basement with the antennas mounted very discretely among the trees in the garden. Nothing is visible from the street and only a trained eye will find the folded dipoles with traps for two bands. Radio Tonair used a 150 watt transmitter built by Torenvalk.



Radio Tonair studio and transmitter.

This transmitter can operate on the 76, 60, 48, 41 and 31 metre bands. At the moment he has no crystals for the 60 metre band. Tonair goes on the air early in the Sunday mornings when his neighbours still are asleep or resting and thus not likely to be disturbed.

At times will Torenvalk and Tonair join forces and go on the air as Radio New World. Then the same programme will be recorded on two cassettes and the two transmitters will start operating at the same time. The transmissions on 31 metre band has been very successful as the frequency is clear outside of Europe. Reports have dropped in from North America, Egypt and other exotic places.

PCGI Goes Internet

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It's time again for PCGI to take the Internet-patrol and this time I have visited some pirates on the net. First of all, I can inform you that the Wuppertal-page can be found on: **http://home.wtal.de/kwfw/**, that is an update.

One thing that came to my mind while surfing around was that most pirate pages had a black background. Why using such a sad colour? And when the web-managers are using blue text, then it becomes a hard task to read it. So, please, use brighter colours for us surfers.

Many stations are also using the V3-service, like welcome.to or surf.to etc. Well, an easy way to get an easy address, but I have also noticed that those servers gets slower and slower, so watch out! Sometimes I get the respond from the server that it's too busy, so you better have a backdoor if you want the visitors to have an easy access to your site.

City FM can be found on **http://www.cityfm.de/**. As most of the others, a quite dark site, but it has some interesting links and information.

http://listen.to/bluestar and all the others produced by Martin Sievers looks almost the same, and has the same concept; dark, some info, some links and photos.

http://surf.to/doctortim
I hate to say this, but this was the most boring site on the FR-internet I have ever seen. Most of the pages did not even work!

http://home.wxs.nl/~trans/
Well, also Transatlantic has been caught with his hands deep into the black ink. Here you have the possibility to listen to a 30 minutes long real audio broadcast. The animated images takes too long time to load.

http://welcome.to/fr-info
The German based magazine **Free Radio Info** has also a web-page. The same colour as all the others, but loads easily. Quite huge QSL-gallery, have a look.

http://www.flanet.com/~ldbrewer/ (Pirate Radio Network)
I do not know what to say, seems to be a bit out of date to me. Did not really give any reflections to shortwave piracy, correct me if I'm wrong.

Also, have a look around for pro-jingles, there are programs to convert real-audio to WAV, among all producers, here is one: http://www.empiresound.com/

That's it for this time, questions and suggestions could be sent to pcgi@srs.pp.se.
Until next time, CU! **Jonny @ SRS**

The Shortwave Pirates from Finland Until 1981

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During the mid 70's as a young DX-er I always reckoned that it was a real pirate DX catch to receive a station from the country in the shadow of the Great Bear. At that time hearing pirates from the USA or New Zealand was unheard of, so on the three occasions that I heard **Radio Sylvania International** I thought "wow, that's coming a long way!" During these years there was a thriving pirate scene in Finland with many stations operating until the authorities got heavy. In this article I will look at how the scene developed and some of the stations that were at the forefront of Finnish pirate radio.

The first station to become well known on short wave from Finland was **Radio Scandinavia.** The station was founded to serve the youngsters of Scandinavia with music and Free Radio information. It was towards the end of 1973 that the operators began building the first short wave transmitter as well as planning the first programmes. The first test transmissions of music with no identification were broadcast in early 1974, leading up to the first official broadcast of Radio Scandinavia on May 25th. The station received many reports for this broadcast, mainly from Finland, most of which reported a good signal. The transmitter used at this time was home built giving a maximum power of 10 watts, crystal controlled on 6249.5 kHz fed into a half wave dipole.

After May 1974 transmissions were aired mainly on Sundays, but with the occasional Saturday transmission, from 0900–1200 UTC. Programmes were presented in Finnish and English, one of the DJ's was Jan Koski who was one of the main Free Radio activists in Finland during the 70's. The address of the Free Radio League in Surnadal, Norway was announced with reports being received from Finland, Sweden and Norway. In fact good reception was reported from a listener some 800 km away from the transmission site.

In the summer of 1974, the quality of the first transmitter began to deteriorate and a new rig rated at 60 watts was constructed. Despite the increase in power the station still suffered interference from the "U beacon" on 6245 kHz. Some tests were made on 6512.5 kHz, but interference was worse so the station returned to 6249.5 kHz. In July 1974 the frequency of 14920 kHz was tried with the intention of reaching listeners in Central Europe, however the power of 5 watts was too low for this purpose.

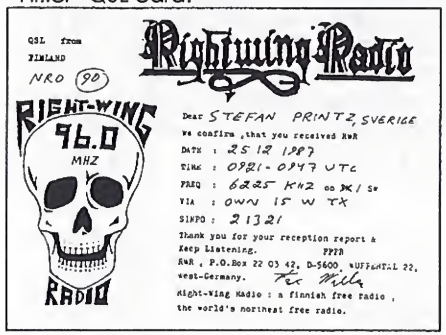
Radio Scandinavia broadcast some special programmes during its lifetime. On May 5th 1974 a joint transmission was made with **Radio Polar International**, for which the Radio Scandinavia rig was used to broadcast a programme produced for Radio Polar in the USA. The following August the station broadcast a programme especially for the participants of a DX-meeting in Southern Finland. Good reception was reported for this despite the fact a full 60 watts could not be used due to aerial problems.

The end for Radio Scandinavia came on September 7th 1975. The station was raided by the Finnish Post Office with all transmitting equipment being taken. So ended the successful run of Finland's first regular Free Radio station on shortwave. Other stations broadcasting from Finland during this time were the aforementioned **Radio Polar International**, broadcasting on 6225 kHz with a power of 30 watts. This station stopped broadcasting at the end of 1974. **UFO Radio** announced the founding of their station in spring 1974, but nothing was heard from them. At the end of the year this station had the distinction of announcing their closure before they started! They did an about turn however, and started almost regular programmes in early 1975, about a year after their original announcement. These were normally on a Sunday from 1000–1030 using a 30 watt rig on 6225 kHz. The station continued until spring 1976. There was a rumour that the station was to return in 1978 but nothing more was heard.

A station, which had quite a long life, was **Radio Gambina.** This station first tested at 1900 hrs on a Monday evening in April 1974. The test was made using a 30 watts VFO controlled transmitter on 6235 kHz, which was fed into an inverted "V" antenna. The first transmission at a "normal" time took place on Sunday April 12th 1974 at 1000. After these first transmissions the GPO became very active so the station changed name to **Radio 240**! From the start Radio Gambina had transmitter problems, so it was decided to construct a new and (hopefully) better rig. This they did and a 15 watt transmitter was brought into service, which resulted in improved reception, with reports being received from Finland, Sweden, Norway and even one from Germany. It was also planned to start FM broadcasts for their local area under a different name. The station suspended broadcasts after almost one year, on the 31st of March 1975. This was due to increased GPO activity in the town where the station was located. Gambina continued broadcasting until 1976 when the FRL folded but reappeared on Sunday February 26th 1978 with a short test on 6208 kHz with irregular transmissions being heard until late 1980.

A station that courted some controversy was **Radio Carillo**, who began transmissions in 1974 on 6280 kHz, later moving to 6225 kHz, with a power of 30 watts. Transmissions were made on Sundays for one hour starting at 0900 or 1000. The station also operated an FM outlet in Helsinki on 101 MHz with a power of 1 watt. By late '74 the station stopped transmissions due to GPO activity, but soon returned to the air as **Radio Black Woods**. It later transpired that this station had a political aim along with sister station **Radio Universal**, who operated on 6280 kHz. In the August 1975 edition of "Free Radio Supporter", published by the FRL, it was announced that both stations had their membership cancelled because they had Nazi sympathies. This had come to light when a Swedish DX-magazine printed the QSL card from Radio Black Woods which

featured a photograph of Adolph Hitler! It was a requirement of the FRL's membership policy that all stations should be politically neutral and despite a letter being sent no explanation was forthcoming from the stations. However in the November '75 edition of "Supporter", a note was published from Radio Universal in which they confirmed they were no longer FRL members and finished the text with "Heil Hitler"! This was along with a reprint of the offending "Hitler" QSL card.


QSL from FINLAND
NRO (90)
Right-Wing Radio
RIGHT-WING 96.0 MHZ RADIO
Dear STEFAN PRINTZ, SVERIGE
We confirm ,that you received RWR
DATE : 25 12 1987
TIME : 0921 - 0947 UTC
FREQ : 6225 KHZ on 9K1 Sw
VIA : OWN 15 W TX
SINPO : 21321
Thank you for your reception report & keep Listening. PPTR
RWR , P.O.Box 22 03 42, D-5600, WUPPERTAL 22, west-Germany.
Right-Wing Radio : a finnish free radio , the world's northest free radio.

Over the years there have been quite a few pirate stations with over the top names, like "Bill Cosmic Space Radio" in Europe or "The Voice of the Kentucky Fried Rhodent" in the USA. One of the first stations in this category originated in Finland, that being **"Radio Station Voices in the Sky".** They began broadcasting in late 1974 firstly on 6225 kHz and after a few months on 6265 kHz. Transmissions were carried out on Saturdays and Sundays between 0930–1030. After a break the station returned on January 1st 1978, now using 6268 kHz with 15 watts of power. Transmissions of varied music were heard on Sundays from 1030–1115, but no address was announced as the FRL had by now folded. Regular transmissions continued through 1978 but became more sporadic the following year. The end came in 1980 when the station was raided during the GPO clamp down.

One of the more active Finnish pirates was **Radio Urbino.** They broadcast their first test on April 27th 1975 on 6249.5 kHz. Like past pirates the station suffered interference from the "U beacon" on 6245 kHz, so a change was made to 6255 kHz with the first transmission being made on May 17th. Two transmitters were used by the station, one 35 watt rig which was regularly used and a 60 watt unit which was a back-up. From August 3rd 1975 the station used 6237 kHz which was fairly free of interference and so became their regular channel. The station slogan was "entertainment after entertainment" playing a variety of pop music hosted by John McLean. Transmissions continued until December 1976 when the station left the air following a raid by Timo Kajaama of the Finnish GPO. Ironically the operator was testing a transmitter for Radio Bambino. However one of the Urbino guys continued his pirate activities by starting one of Finland's most famous stations, **Radio Sylvania International.**

Radio Bee was irregularly active on 6235 kHz using a 15 watt transmitter starting in 1975 with broadcasts being heard until 1977. **Radio Saturnus** started transmissions in the summer of 1975 on 6235 kHz, although other frequencies used were 6221 and 6230 kHz. The station had a 15 watt transmitter and used the slogan "The voice of the stars". They were a fairly regular broadcaster until they disappeared in 1977. Another station started around the same time as Saturnus, that was **Radio Weekend** normally heard on 6203 kHz. Initially they had a 15 watt transmitter but soon upgraded to a 200 watt unit. Using this probably attracted the attention of the GPO and the station suffered a raid in 1977 which meant the end for Radio Weekend. Meanwhile a station called **Radio Red Lion** announced that broadcasts would start in February 1977. Some transmissions were made on 6255 kHz on Saturdays and Sundays at 1000 hrs, but nothing on a regular basis. In the summer of 1979 the station once again announced the start of transmissions, but nothing more was heard.

Radio Sylvania International first appeared in March 1977 and quickly became well known amongst DX-ers due to the good quality transmissions and programming. They normally used a power of 150 watts on 6235 kHz, which usually gave good reception all over Scandinavia. In fact the Sylvania signal made it all the way to Scotland on three occasions! The stations main problem was lack of suitable transmitter sites as running a high power rig required a mains base. However the odd mobile transmission was made, e.g. in May 1978 on 6235 kHz and again on September 3rd using 6221 kHz, when the operator used the 15 watt rig of Fox Radio which he had fixed for that station. There was a noticeable difference when the low power rigs were in use. Programmes normally lasted one hour and were presented, in Finnish, by DJ Daniel who played a curious combination of soul and rock n roll.

The Sylvania guys often had problems with the GPO. Firstly in November 1976 a very popular FM pirate in the Turku area was raided and closed. The popularity of this station prompted the GPO action. Then in January 1978 another one of the operators was caught whilst testing a 30 watt rig with non-stop music. The authorities didn't turn up until around one hour after the transmission ended, but along with the 30 watt also took a 250 watt shortwave and an FM transmitter. Mind you it probably didn't help when during the Sylvania transmission on June 11th 1978 the DJ's Tony Grey and Dave sniped at the GPO! Reminiscent of ABC England who did the same thing and always had problems with the Home Office.

The station started to become more irregular during 1979, mainly because the GPO were after them and knew all the operators. The station started broadcasting at night and early mornings on 48 metres with 10 watts of power, but response for these broadcasts was virtually nil. The same can be said for medium wave transmissions made on 227 m and 180 m with a 20 watt rig. Also during that year one of the operators was conscripted into the Finnish Army which added to the station's problems. The last note I have of Radio Sylvania was in early 1981 when they were still reported to be irregular using a power of 200 watts. It is likely that the heavy GPO activity at this time meant the end of the station.

There was a network of Finnish pirates on air in the late 70's, **The Night Gallery Network.** The founder station was naturally enough **Radio Night Gallery** which began transmissions on FM, but acquired a shortwave transmitter and made some tests in Spring and Autumn 1976. These broadcasts were made on 6275 kHz with a 15 watt transmitter, although the station suffered from persistent bad modulation quality. The station broadcast pop and country music presented by DJ Alex. The station did not broadcast in 1977 as the station operator was in the Finnish Army. The station made a couple of transmissions in 1979 but never broadcast regularly and had disappeared by 1980.

The next NCN station was **Radio Piratinga** operated by Herbert Hertz, which made a few tests on 48 metres using 15 watts of power in the summer of 1975, but received little response due to a bad aerial. In January 1977 a new transmitter giving some 35 watts was brought into service with improved results, in fact a report was received from some 900 km away. The station was

inactive from June 1977 until March 19th 1978 when it returned to its usual 6237 kHz frequency. A dipole antenna was introduced which improved the signal even further across Scandinavia. Radio Piratinga had quite a unique programme format consisting of mainly Tango music, but also Country and old Finnish hits could be heard. The stations jingles were recorded by a professional Colombian DJ which promoted "Radio Piratinga – La Voz del Tango". Broadcast language was Spanish, except at the start and close of broadcasts when identification could also be heard in Finnish, Swedish, English and German. In 1979 the station made several broadcasts on 6225 or 6237 kHz but had become inactive by 1980.

The third NCN member station was **Radio Flamingo**, which was founded in November 1976 although it was on February 6th 1977 that the station officially started. The first transmissions were made on 6205 kHz with 15 watts but had limited range due to a bad antenna. Some transmissions were also made on FM with 3 watts of power. The station went silent during the following summer returning in September '77 with a new aerial and frequency of 6235 kHz, which resulted in reports from as far as Southern Norway. Radio Flamingo temporarily closed after the transmission on May 28th 1978, when they tested a "balun" antenna with excellent results. A return was made on March 25th 1979 with a handful of transmissions being heard before the station disappeared in late 1979. One problem the station suffered from was consistently bad modulation but despite this Radio Flamingo received well over 100 letters mainly from Finland and Sweden, also a few from Norway. The programmes featured mainly Country music presented by Charles Bondon, the station operator and DJ Beaver.

Probably the most active of the NCN member stations was **Radio Bambino**, who used the slogan "The Backwood River Valley Broadcasing". The station was formed in 1977 and tried many times to get on air without success until their transmitter finally packed in. A new transmitter was hastily constructed giving a similar output of 30 watts with which Radio Bambino returned to the air on February 26th 1978 being heard as far as Norway. The station were heard pretty regularly on 6205 kHz with programmes of rock'n'roll and Free Radio news presented by Rolf Robertson and Lucifer Radix. A new 15 watt transmitter was introduced in 1979 which allowed the station to go mobile, resulting in increased activity during 1979. Apparently it was a "hobby" of the station to broadcast on the same frequency as the Finnish National Radio on 91.6 FM. However with a power of 1.5 watts I feel this "protest" may have been fairly worthless! The station was still active in 1981.

Fox Radio was the next NCN member, however this station broadcast very irregularly. It tested a few times in spring and autumn 1977 but the transmitter stopped working! The 15 watt mobile rig was given to the engineer at Radio Sylvania who, as mentioned earlier, fixed the transmitter and made a couple of successful broadcasts using it. Fox Radio eventually made it back on October 29th 1978 with a test on 6273 kHz, which was heard well in Finland and Sweden. However this was the last transmission with the transmitter being sold to Radio Kohoutek.

In Spring 1978 it was announced that **Radio Urbino** was to return to the air. Of course this was with new operators as the original guys were now running Sylvania. This Urbino was to use the 15 watt VFO transmitter formerly owned by Radio Saturnus. The station made their return on September 27th 1978 using both 6235 and later 6205 kHz. Another transmission was made on October 27th on 6203 kHz following the transmission of Radio Bambino. A few more transmissions were made until in 1979 the station changed name to **Radio Eagle International**. This station first appeared in spring 1979 and was noticable for its poor modulation. A few broadcasts were heard and they were noted into 1981. They were also the founders of the **Eagle Pirate Club**, which consisted of two shortwave and six FM stations. The other SW station was the aforementioned **Radio Kohoutek** who began transmissions in July 1979 on 6200 kHz.

Some listeners may remember hearing **Radio Bonanza** on 227 m being relayed by a Dutch pirate. This station started shortwave transmissions as **Radio Mustang** on 6207, 6225 or 6250 kHz using 30 watts. The opening broadcast was on February 18th
1979 and soon Mustang became the most active Finnish pirate. Like the majority of stations this was a one man operation, the main man being Andy Mustang. A new transmitter was in operation by autumn '79 giving an output of 60 watts but the station had gone by summer 1980.

Another new pirate took to the air on April 1st 1979, **Radio Sound of Finland** broadcasting on 6225 kHz with 15 watts of power. They soon established themselves as one of the most regular Sunday morning stations along with Radio Mustang. A second 15 watt rig allowed SOF to do mobile transmissions. The station was also heard on 227 m via the high powered Dutch pirates of the time. Programmes consisted of mainly Disco music hosted by DJ Roger. The station later had a 100 watt transmitter in operation, but suffered a raid in 1981.

The Finnish pirate explosion continued in 1979 with **Radio El Bimbo** taking to the air at Easter. They used 6200 or 6225 kHz with a mere 3 watts of power. It was around this time that more and more operators were using these small rigs. El Bimbo became a regular operator and also had some programmes relayed on 227 m from Holland. The station suffered a raid in 1980 which finished the station. Another station with a similar name to start around this time was **Radio El Condor Pasa**. Again a 3 watt transmitter was in use on 6230 kHz with broadcasts every Sunday. Probably because of this regular activity the station was raided in June 1980. This was the second time the operator had been caught as he received a visit during a past FM transmission. However the station was reported back on the air in early 1981 with 1,000 watts, mind you these were probably "Finnwatts" !

We have already mentioned the original NCN stations, which were soon joined by others like **Radio 48**. They started at Easter 1979 and could be heard on 6206, 6225 or 6250 kHz. Their transmitter was rated at 30 watts with noticeably good modulation. The station continued transmitting on a fairly regular basis until 1981. Another member was **Radio Royals** whose first broadcasts were heard in June 1979 on 6230 kHz using powers of up to 80 watts. They were reported as late as 1981, supposedly running 600 finnwatts of power.

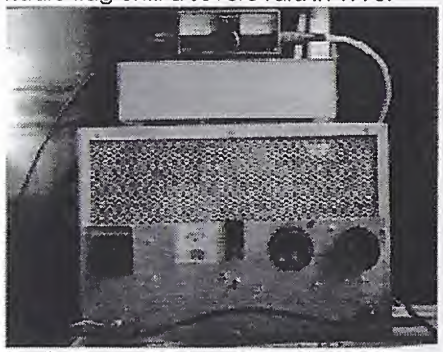
The summer of 1979 saw the first poor quality tests of **Radio Rasputin** on 6233 kHz with 3 watts of power. The station soon acquired a 10 watt rig, which improved things dramatically, and

began broadcasting every Sunday on either 6213 or 6225 kHz. An FM service was also on air for the Lahti area using a 10 watt transmitter on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The end came in May 1980 when they were raided.

Low power seemed to be the order of the day with the new breed of Finnish pirates with **Radio Botnia** using a mere 1.7 watts with surprisingly good results. They first appeared in summer'79 using 6235 kHz on Saturday mornings. Later a 15 watt mobile rig was in use on either 6206 on 6216 kHz. The station wasn't reported after 1979. Another pirate to appear on 48 metres at this time was **Radio Foggy** who used a 15 watt mobile rig. They continued into 1980.

Swine Radio, another fairly new 48 metre operation, were raided on April 4th 1980. The court case that followed proved quite traumatic for the operator for he was fined 25,000 Finnish Marks. Quite an amount when you consider that the usual fine, e.g. in the case of **Radio Anarkia** which was raided in June '80, was in the region of 120 FIM. Despite this Swine Radio was back in 1981. So during 1980 six stations were raided, to recap Radio Station Voices in the Sky, Radio El Bimbo, Radio El Condor Pasa, Radio Rasputin along with the two just mentioned. This was the start of a big clamp down on pirate radio with heavy fines, including monetary demands for the performing rights agency for copyright music. Despite this the number of active stations grew, including **Radio Rugby** (40w), **Radio Mundenia** (5w), **Radio Polaris, Radio Isanmaa, Radio Raggare, Radio Exotic and Radio Baader-Meinhof Experience**(!), **Radio Kansas, Capital Sound, Radio Rowell, Radio Rude** and **Radio Titan.**

Radio Meteor had their first transmission in 1980 using a mere 5 watts of power and of course continued flying the Free Radio flag until a severe raid in 1995.



Radio Meteor's 60 W transmitter, 1991

Their sister station **Radio Scanwood** also first appeared in this year. **Radio Bristol** first jumped onto 48 metres in 1980 and indeed continues to this day. **Radio Boston International** were also a regular at this time using powers varying from 10–100 watts. They made their farewell broadcast on September 6th 1981 and then went in to the business of selling transmitters. **Radio Dragon** were noted on several 48 metre frequencies, supposedly using powers of up to 1000 watts! They were still broadcasting in 1982. **Radio Linda** was another regular at this time, normally around 6227 kHz.

And that is really as far as my records go! I know there were raids in the early 80's, which virtually silenced Finnish pirates on shortwave. The resulting court cases not only fined operators for illegal broadcasting, but as mentioned earlier, the Finnish copyright people were looking for a cut! I now invite someone with knowledge from that era to bring our story bang up to date. Sources included Free Radio League, KDKC magazine and the operator of Radio Flamingo with whom I had regular contact in the late 70's.

11th Annual Winter SWL Festival

12-14 March 1998 Pennsylvania USA

DJ Stevie
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Have you ever been to a radio festival in the USA? Luckily for me it was my first time and one I'll always remember. The flight from Europe might be considered tiring by some, but for me it was an experience truly rewarded. Winter is the cheapest time to fly to the USA. Check out the discount prices that airlines are happily 'throwing' away around this time of the year. Who knows, it could be your chance to join in the fun next year.

This year's gathering took place at the very comfortable Holiday Inn, Kulpsville on the outskirts of Pennsylvania. It was attended by around 200 satisfied radio freaks who certainly knew what enjoyment was all about. It appeared that everyone knew everyone else. Talk about a family reunion!

Peter Worth of Radio Anteater (left) with DJ Stevie

The notorious "Gang of Three" **Kris Field, Bob Brown** and **Harold Jones** are the brains behind this momentous festival. I was warmly greeted by the 'Gang' as I made my "jet lagged" entrance into the Ballroom. The buzz is kept energetically alive all day long as herds of people enthusiastically gather together to spread the good word of radio. Here one could indulge in buying the latest goods on offer or converse with old and new friends alike. With stalls generously overflowing with information and goodies, the radio clubs and pirates never knew what hit them. I was kindly given my own radio stall where I personally handed out tons of specially printed booklets, stickers and of course Swiss chocolates – thanks to **Andrew Yoder** who scoffed the lot down in no less than ten minutes!

Forums were thriving all day in the *Oslo/ Copenhagen rooms*. Topics ranged from Longwave DX-ing, Antenna talk, New equipment review, Utilities and The year in pirate radio, just to name a few. George Zeller and Andy Yoder put on an excellent show when it came to their intellectual talk on pirates. These two guys know just about everything when it comes to pirates. Generally, the forums were very interesting and professionally executed.

The Raffle, which is held during the banquet, is a "must" when it comes to winning attractive prizes. Tickets were

eagerly sold during the festival at a record speed. Tons of exceptional brilliant prizes were out to be grabbed. The first prize, a Lowe HF 225 went to a very delighted person. Five more sophisticated radios were also handed out which keep the crowd begging for more. I've never seen so many wonderful prizes that were kindly donated by suppliers and participants. Nice one guys!

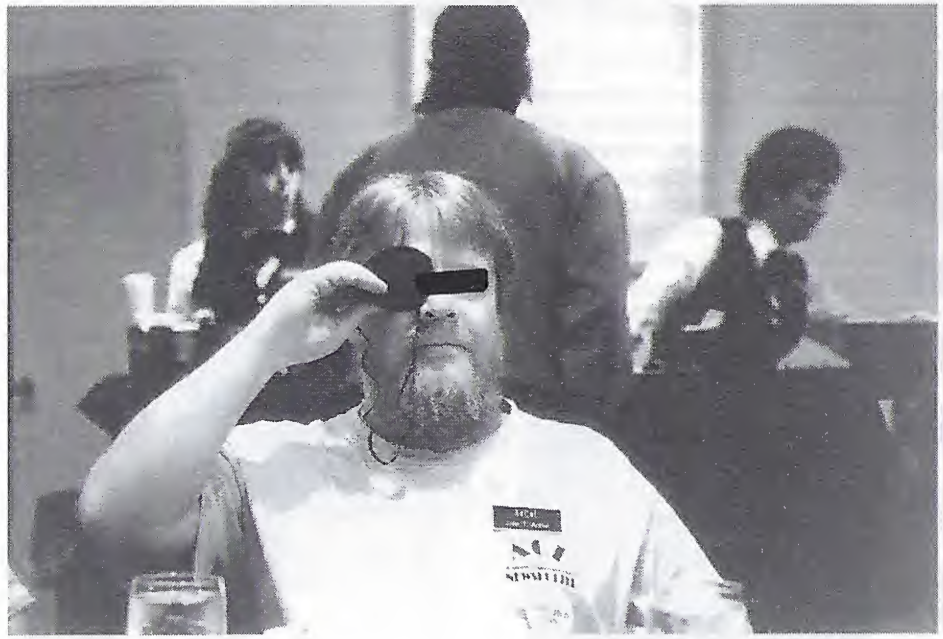
Pirate meeting with George Zeller and Andy Yoder.

The Hospitality Room (room 327) was constantly filled every evening for the duration of the festival. With chilled beer flowing like a spring and plenty of chat, everyone was contented to the brim.

The Silent Auction (room 153) had a variety of truly extraordinary items that were auctioned during the day. The rules were simple: write your bid on a piece of paper next to the item you wanted, wait until the end of the day and see if you were the highest bidder. What a very clever and interesting idea!

The enticing thing about this festival was meeting the people. They came from all over the USA, Canada and South America. Michael Murrey from the UK was the only other participant beside myself who made the trip from Europe. Maybe that will change with time?! Radio Nonsense, Anteater Radio, Void Radio, Mutiny Radio, Radio USA, WREC were just some of the stations that I had the privilege to have met. PJ Sparks of WREC had the misfortune of having his grandfather critically ill in hospital during the festival. PJ's dedication and commitment to Free Radio keep him on for those three sombre days. Sadly, his grandfather passed away a few days later on. I would personally like to express my sincere condolences to PJ and his family on the loss of their beloved one. May he rest in peace.

Peter Worth of **Anteater Radio** was my cream on the cake. Peter is a great guy who knows what fun is all about when it comes to pirate broadcasting. As Peter is predominantly on the road most of the year in his 18 Wheel Truck, he provides a constant overflow of pirate shows that comes 'live' from of his truck. Pirate stations from all over the world have been using his distinguished services for a long time. With his sophisticated receiver bolted firmly onto his dashboard, he bangs out the pirate tapes day and night as he rolls through the busy highways of the USA and Canada. I had the privilege to have had a ride in his 18 wheel monster while he blasted the airwaves to oblivion. It's something I'll never forget. Peter's unique style of broadcasting has brought ecstasy to many listeners scattered all over the USA/Canada. If you ever hear horns blasting the airwaves, you'll know exactly whom you're listening to. Keep those horns blasting Peter!



Ace "Big Boss" John.

Andrew Yoder was a name that I had heard of for many years. Meeting him for the first time was a real honour. Andrew is a very intellectual guy who has devoted a lot of his time to the world of pirate radio. As a talented writer, his books have been read with admiration all over the planet. His latest book "Pirate Radio Operations" is a masterpiece which should be read by all who are ardent pirate fans. Thanks to people like Andrew, pirate radio will live on forever.

The Voice of Pancho Villa is a pirate station with strong ties to the festival. Once a year these "cool dudes" get down to action and produce a show which is broadcast live to an eager waiting hungry audience. From their sophisticated studio somewhere in Pennsylvania, the "cool dudes" blast out a show which always pleases the masses. I had the privilege to have seen The Voice of Pancho Villa in full action. I was approached by a man in dark glasses who tied me up and threw me into his trunk of his Cadillac. Frightened and mentally unstable, I was whisked miles away to a secret location where the studio was located. Now blindfolded and begging for mercy, the show began. With microphones blaring and Bill and Monica in full flight, life would never be the same. How could they have done this to me? These guys are real pro's and know what a good time is all about. It's an experience that will stay with me for the rest of my life. Hey gringos, I know who you are! Thanks for a fantastic time.

I'll give you an idea as to what it would cost you if you came. Return flight to Pennsylvania around $400. Airport shuttle from airport to hotel $20 per person one way. Hotel room per night $64 (double or single!) without food. The hotel has a great restaurant/bar, so you won't go hungry. There's a cheaper restaurant across from the hotel that serves good food too. If you need more information, please contact me at the address above. Tnx to all! See you next year!

Radio Cochiguaz

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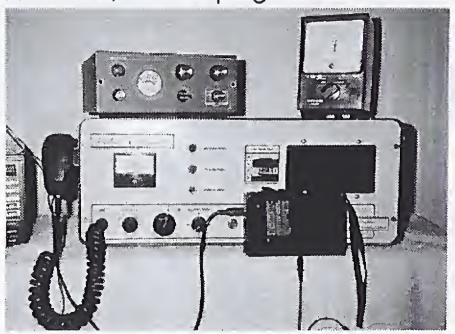
Beneath the Mask

I guess you've all noticed that South American piracy has slowly but steadily grown strong the past few years. When Jorge R. Garcia of **Radio Piraña International** moved back with his family to a country in South America in 1995, he was the first pirate to hit the shortwave band on that continent! Since then, a number of other stations have been born, and the most popular one at present is **Radio Cochiguaz.** The popularity was strongly confirmed when the station surprisingly won last year's **SRS News station poll**, voted by the bulletin's readers!



The heart of Radio Cochiguaz!

The story of Cochiguaz started two years ago, when **Cachito Mamani**, fascinated by the pirate broadcasters he had managed to pick up, decided to try and persuade some friends of his to materialise an idea he had been mulling over for some time.

He and his friend **Paco Jeréz** got together and came upon the name "Cochiguaz", which is of indigenous Quechua origin. They thought it had an appealing phonetic sound to it, naturally born from its Andean roots, this fitted in very well to the associations of the essence of the station.

By the aid of **Perico San Miguel** and after several hours hard work, the very first recordings were completed in January 1997 and were later aired on February 1st from a secret location in South America. The frequency in use was 11413 kHz and the programmes were also repeated a number of occasions on 6926 kHz.

Currently, the station broadcasts on two frequencies, 6950 and 6980 kHz, using an SSB transmitter running on 100 W.

Recently, I was in contact with the station operator Cachito and asked him a few questions that I have been curious about for some time.

Could you tell us about piracy in South America? As far as we know here in Europe, pirate radio on your continent is just a few years old.
Yes, the piracy in South America is very new. This began in the end of 1995 with the operations of **Radio Piraña International**, the pioneer in the South American continent. The second pirate to be born was ourselves and then, after instigation by myself, followed (in chronological order) **Radio Blandengue**, **FLARS – Free Latin American Radio Station** and **Dark Pampa Radio**. The most active of these stations beside ourselves is Radio Blandengue through relays by our station.

What's your station format like and what's the purpose of your programming?
The format of Radio Cochiguaz is 100% Andean folk music and the purpose is, as for all pirate stations, to test new antennas and new locations (the transmitter was last moved to a new location on June 3rd 1998), but also to bring the Andean music style to our listeners. We also play some Cumbian and Latin American music.

Do you have any connections with Radio Piraña International, and if so, has he influenced your station in any way?
Jorge R. Garcia is a very, very good friend of mine! We have a good friendship and co-operation between us, and of course, the transmissions of Radio Piraña International have influenced a lot for the appearance of Radio Cochiguaz in the South American scene of free stations.

What do you think about the possibilities to hear your station signal in Europe? Have you received any reception reports from Europe so far?
Our signal (broadcast directly from our third transmitter site in South America) was heard in Turku, Finland by Risto Harjula and twice by Rainer Brandt in Germany. These reports were received through a tape from Finland (Q2) and a very detailed report from Rainer in Germany. Usually our signal is also heard in South Africa, in several South American countries, and in USA and Canada, too. Moreover, through relays by **Jolly Roger Radio** in Ireland, we have received lots of reception reports from listeners in Europe.

Pisco is the national beverage in Chile, made from the Muscatel grape. One of them is named "Artesanos del Cochiguaz"!

Have you managed to receive any Euro pirates? US pirates?
Only through relays outside of Europe. From USA I once received a station on 6955 kHz USB.

NOORDZEE FM HAS OFF SHORE ROOTS

Karl-Erik Stridh
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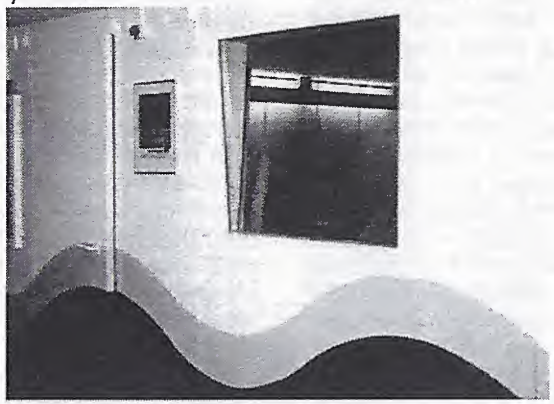
SWEDEN

In Bussum east of Amsterdam you will find de Hoofstede, which is a building from the 18th century. Here Noordzee FM have their studios. This is also the home of **Hollands Glorie** and a large production studio. Also **Classic FM** is connected to this company. The programmes of Classic FM are however produced in London and fed to the Dutch transmitters by a satellite link. Radio Noordzee is a name with traditions. It first appeared in 1964 with transmissions during daytime on 1400 kHz from the artificial REM-eiland. It was used during the evenings by TV Noordzee which soon become a hit with Dutch TV viewers but not with the politicians and authorities. The latter soon found that an artificial island like an oil drilling rig is standing on legs on the seabed. Thus they could claim the Dutch right to their part of the continental shelf, even if it was outside their territorial waters. Within three months the transmissions were outlawed. However, TV Noordzee had an insurance with Lloyds of London, which would refund them all expenses if the island was forcefully entered by the Dutch authorities. Thus the transmissions continued for some time and as expected the island was boarded by the authorities who used ships and helicopters in a commando raid. Out of this station grew **TROS** which became the first organisation ("zuil") to share the official transmitters in Hilversum without having a political or religious background. TROS soon grew to the biggest organization with most programme hours.

The Noordzee studio.

A dramatic history

The station name reappeared in 1970 in German spelling. Radio Nordsee International was established onboard the brightly coloured ship Mebo II. It was named after the founders, the Swiss duo **Erwin Meister** and **Edwin Bollier** who had spent four million Swiss francs in this station with a 100 kW MW transmitter, two 10 kW shortwave transmitters and a 1 kW FM transmitter. Later another 10 kW MW transmitter from **Radio 390** was added as a backup. The main transmitter was a prototype from RCA which proved to have a problem with overheating. Thus it was operated most of the time on reduced power of 35 – 40 kW. Unfortunately the station was plagued by a lot of problems the first year. Poorly chosen frequencies resulted in jamming by the Norwegian coastal station **Rogaland Radio** on shortwave. The station had originally intended to broadcast in English and German to the industrial Ruhr area in Germany but a too high MW frequency gave a too weak signal during daytime. Then the ship moved to the British coast and got jammed by a 1 MW transmitter by the British authorities. This resulted in a lot of frequency changes but each time the jammer reappeared so finally the ship was moved back to the Dutch coast. Then the jamming ceased. However, the station still had very few advertisers and in September 1970 the station closed. Now Meister and Bollier did a very strange deal. They got a million German Marks to let Radio Veronica control the ship that was kept silent in international waters. In the meantime the Swiss contacted the Dutch publishing company Basart. The subsidiary International Musicals N.V., which published the pop magazine Muziek Parade, would produce daily Dutch programmes. During the evening there should still be English programmes under the control of Meister and Bollier. After having tricked the Veronica captain from the radio ship Meister and Bollier again had the control of the Mebo II. Now they brought a suitcase packed with one million German Marks to the Radio Veronica office. The money was however refused and a number of court meeting followed, all won by RNI. The station resumed broadcasting with an official opening on March 9, 1971. Responsible for the Dutch programmes was **Joon de Mol Senior**, who still is on the board of the present RNN.


Waves in a hallway at RNI studios!

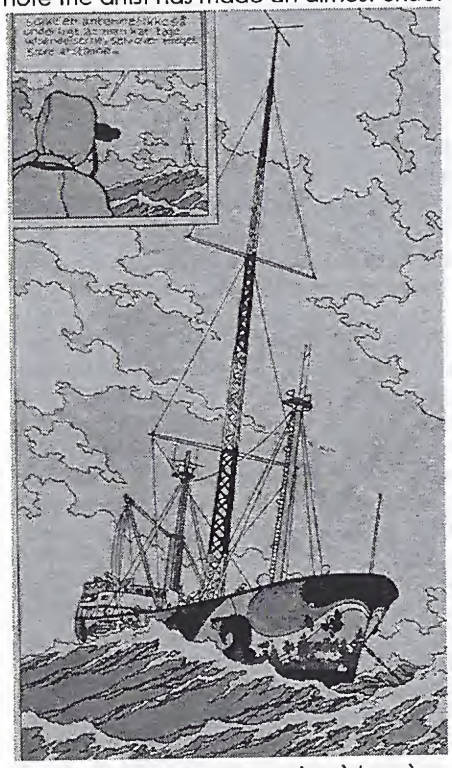
RNN quickly became one of the leading stations in Europe with a big influence on the record sales. Under the five years the station was on the air it is easy to note a upturn in the sale internationally for Dutch groups like Shocking Blue, Focus, Golden Earring, Bonnie St. Clair & Unit Gloria, Cats and George Baker Selection. Also the creativity among the groups increased. The same thing happened in Britain during the British off shore radio boom. RNI also played the first hit ever for Donna Summer. A song called "The hostage" was recorded in Munich but only released in the Netherlands on Basart records.

At the reception in Bussum as well as in the office in Zürich the station had a model of the radio ship Mebo II in a monitor. The Dutch one is since a few years ago lent to the Dutch Omroepsmuseum in Hilversum.

Bomb onboard

There was a big setback in the evening of May 15, 1971 when three men, among them a former captain of the ship, arrived in a rubber dingy while the crew was watching football on TV. The men mounted a firebomb onboard. An explosion followed and a severe fire broke out, which destroyed the whole stern of the ship. Fortunately was the bomb by mistake mounted at the water tanks and not at the diesel tanks. DJ **Allan West** interrupted the regular programme and started to send mayday calls. This resulted in complete chaos at the switchboard in the Netherlands. While the extension work was in progress Allan West kept broadcasting not knowing the studio was situated between the diesel tanks! Next day the damage could be inspected. It was decided to carry out the repairs at sea. Transmissions kept on as usual. The ratings grew drastically, especially when

it was revealed that Radio veronica had triggered the decision to attack the ship. Radio Veronica had made an extreme error of judgement as it gave the authorities an excuse to ratify the Strasbourg treaty from 1965. End of August 1974 the fun ended and eventually become the Mebo II a Khoran station in Libya! RNI had many listeners in neighbouring Belgium and it is interesting to note that they have a tradition of very good cartoons. Georges Remi, under the signature of Hergé, produced the Tintin cartoons. He had an assistant called Bob de Moor who later started on his own with the cartoon Barelli. In the 1975 magazine "Bomme mine à la mer" you can read about the offshore station Radio Neptun which is the target of an attempted bombing. It is interesting to note the artist has made an almost exact



Bob de Moor's "Bomme mine à la mèr.

copy of the Mebo II! Ironically would Mebo AG in Zürich show up in another bombing. The detonator that caused the wreck of a Pan-Am flight in Lockerbie in Scotland had been delivered by this company that traded with Eastern Europe.

Radio Veronica formed **VOO** and managed to get part in the official radio and TV in Hilversum, just like TROS. VOO soon grew to be the biggest organisation. RNI formed Stichting RTV Noordzee but failed to raise enough members. Both stations should return as private commercial stations during th 90's. And now Noordzee would become the most popular of the two. Originally Radio Noordzee Nationaal broadcast mainly Dutch schlager and oldies. On February 8, 1998 the supplementary channel Radio Hollands Glorie started. It was a channel that exclusively played Dutch artists like Pierre Kartner (Vader Abraham), Corry Konings, De Havenzangers and Jantje Smit, all artists well known to those who have tuned in Dutch MW pirates. This channel is fully automated with non-stop music and jingles on a hard disc only interrupted by own produced news and weather prediction on top of the hour. As opposed to the development in Sweden Dutch station keep a strict tradition with news every hour. Hollands Glorie is so far only available in Dutch cable systems and has not yet reached the whole of the country. The present reach is a million households.

Change of format

The start of Hollands Glorie has given Radio Noordzee Nationaal the possibility to change the format to a format with more of current pop hits by Dutch artists. The really embarrassing tunes they don't have to play anymore. RNI was famous for its coverage of Tour de France but today's station keeps the spoken items to a minimum. RNN has all the music on

CD's. These are loaded in a number of very reliable CD juke boxes controlled by a computer.

The evening programme "Sterren van de Hemel" (Stars of the sky) is fully pre-produced. The presenter Bob van Beeten is able to make a whole week's programmes during two working days. On a computer screen he will see the songs that will be included in the programme. He records his presentations as computer files. He has 4 – 5 breaks during a programme hour. Generally the station airs a lot of non- stop music with few jingles and far between the spoken items. Even if the station uses computer control, it is not fully employed. Often ten seconds of a song is played before the in house produced news on top of the hour. This flaw could have been avoided in a number of ways. One way is the presenter adjusts his presentations so the last record ends exactly on top of the hour. Another way is to let the computer select the final tune of each hour so you get one that fits exactly. A third way is to let the computer fill in with an instrumental tune or instrumental station jingle before the news if there was time left over. The competitor **Sky Radio** had the same problem but solved it in a forth way. They start their newscast after the song and not exactly on the hour. The directors of RNN have been informed but did not care about this problem.

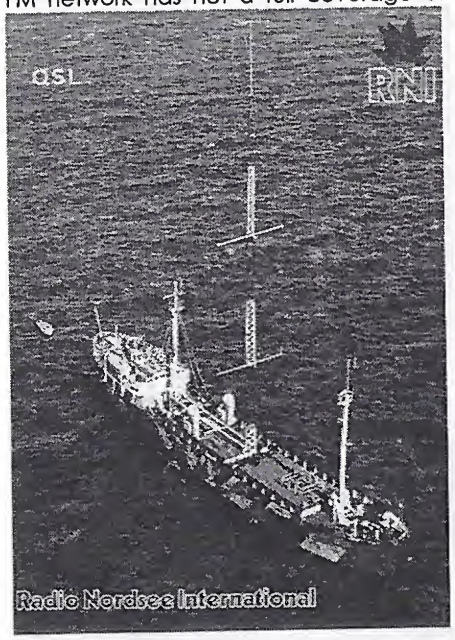
Radio Noordzee Nationaal brings also a few specialist programmes. Weekdays between 14 and 16 local time **Conny Vandenbos** presents well known guests. Saturdays 09 – 10 **Martin Gaus** will answer questions regarding pets. Sundays 07 – 08 there is a programme for toddlers. Between 09 and 10 and between 21 and 22 there is a programme hosted by the shrink **Jomanda.** A health care programme airs between 20 and 21 on Sundays. The station also presents its own record chart and a programme where artists present their latest discs.

In the Netherlands there is a tradition of contact with the listeners during outside broadcasts. Many stations tour with an OB bus during the summer. Radio Noordzee Nationaal went one step further and opened its own restaurant. Radio Noordzee Beach Club was strategically placed on the Zaandvoort beach. Listeners could sip on a beer or a drink while **Peter Teekamp** broadcast weekdays 12 – 14 the programme "Met Teekamp in Zee" with interviews of exiting guests. Unfortunately the summer of 1998 was very wet so the number of visitors was lower than anticipated.

Proud of its origin

RNN is housed in the same building as the Dutch programmes on RNI were pre-recorded. The hallway along the studios has blue waves painted on the walls. A computer in the news department has a picture of Mebo II as background. In the technical control room there is a framed RNI QSL card with the call signs of the ham stations housed on the ship inked in. In this room there is also an unlicensed 5 watt FM transmitter con-

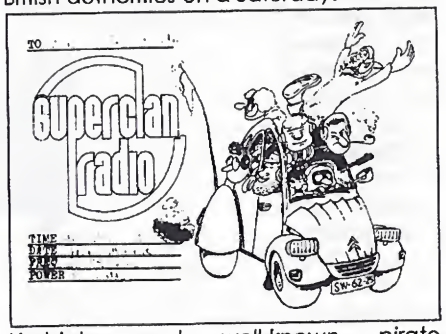
nected to a car rod antenna. The transmitter was intended for in house listening to the own station. The official FM network has not a full coverage of



The QSL of RNI.

the country with six transmitter sites. They are fed an encrypted digital satellite delivered signal.

The newsroom uses computers and teleprinters as well as text TV, Herbert Visser showed me around. He is a newsreader on RNN and Hollands Glorie. The newscasts are recorded as computer files well before the top of the hour. **Herbie** was only 9 when RNI was on the air. Still he has been on several stations. As a shortwave DX-er he got interested in pirate radio and did run **Superclan Radio** for some time. A friend drew the QSL card. He also worked for the FM pirate **Delta Radio** in Nijmegen. He was present during 17 raids by the authorities at that station. The competitor **Keizerstad Radio** was raided more than 100 times! He found the best FM pirates had been in Nijmegen, The Hague and Rotterdam. Later he became the morning DJ on **Radio Monique**, which shared Radio Caroline's ship MV Ross Revenge during the 80's. He left for **Radio 10 Gold** and ended up at Radio Noordzee Nationaal. He is still involved in the Free Radio world as he's been operating **XMAS** and also helped an Israeli group get a former light ship in England and transmitters from Germany. This became the station Arutz 2000 now operating off Tel Aviv. The group consisted of ortodox jews so they couldn't pick up a telephone and call for help when they were raided by British authorities on a Saturday.



Herbie's most well-known pirate operation, Superclan Radio, which started off back in 1985 and can still be heard on shortwave occasionally.

Part of a company group

RNN:s parent company is Strengholt which owns among others the music producer Basart, a production studio, EIA Readytone and a book publishing company. There are about 40 employees at RNN. Thanks to the resources of the company group RNN is able to publish a magazine which is freely available at record stores. The station also sells record compilations. **Jon de Mol Junior** is part owner of the company Endemol which produces TV programmes and also sells program concepts for game shows and match making programmes to European TV stations.

RADIO 10 GOLD
A POPULAR DUTCH STATION

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SWEDEN

Radio 10 Gold is the Dutch private station with the longest history as a licensed land-based station. **Noordzee FM** and **Veronica FM** have a longer history if you include their pre-history as off shore-stations. A fact that has inspired Radio 10 Gold a lot. This station has not made a detour over the state broadcasting system in Hilversum like Veronica did before establishing itself as a licensed station. Radio 10 gold used another detour! At the end of the 80's, private stations started to use the Dutch cable nets, which are the most widespread in Europe.

Before the cable systems were introduced you saw a forest of TV-antennas before you reached a Dutch village. Due to the absence of hills it was possible to watch TV-programmes from neighbouring countries like Germany, Belgium and the UK if you used a high mast. With the cables the households got a more reliable signal and also satellite stations. At the beginning only channels of the state monopoly along with foreign stations were allowed to be distributed by cable. Radio 10 Gold started as **Radio 10** (Tien) with a broad hit-oriented music format. From the studio at Hondhorsstraat close to the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the signal was up-linked and fed to a FM-station in Milan in northern Italy. **Radio Milano International** operated this transmitter. Now the station could claim it was a foreign channel despite the programmes were broadcast in Dutch for a Dutch audience. The offshore station **Radio Delmare** used a similar scheme to circumvent the Dutch MOA. Somehow cassette copies appeared on their ship... And they could operate an office in The Hague. The Radio Tien signal was now allowed to be linked back to Dutch cable systems. The station had fulfilled the conditions of article 10 in the Dutch constitution which allows the distribution of foreign signals. The station simply named itself after the article that guaranteed its existence! One of the founders of the station was the MD **Wim Rigter** who had a background at **VARA** in Hilversum.

Change of format

The station started as Radio 10 and became a hit with teens. Soon the station wanted a broader base and changed format and name to the present Radio 10 Gold with an oldies based format. To compensate the teens Power FM was started with a targeting the 16 – 24 age group with a tight, fast presentation. One year later this channel was replaced by **Love Radio** on MTV transponder 22 on the Astra satellite. However the distribution of this channel stopped already after a few months. In the mid 90's the European Union declared it was desirable to increase the choices. State owned stations were no longer allowed to send the same programme in parallel on AM and FM. One result was the introduction of **Talk Radio** and **Virgin 1215** in the UK. In the Netherlands Hilversum 3 left 675 kHz and the transmitter was taken over by Radio 10 Gold. With a power of 120 kW the station is covering the whole country and

further afield. Listeners abroad got a nice gift when the French station on the same channel closed down and the reception improved a lot. Radio 10 Gold is very popular with Dutch truckers who listen to the programme in wide parts of Europe. The station therefore has regular traffic reports during daytime and even a morning programme targeted at this group. At the same time other stations were allocated powerful FM transmitters but Radio 10 Gold managed to strengthen its position. Even better was the situation in January 1998 when the station also got a 50 kW FM transmitter on 103,0 MHz in Lelystad. It covers wide parts of Northern and central of the Netherlands. During the summer of 1998 this was improved further with a fill in on 103,3 MHz in Rotterdam. With a 9,5 % share the station is only beaten by **Sky Radio** with a 14.4% share. Earlier when both stations only used cable Radio 10 Gold was more popular than Sky Radio.

Tom Mulder

Owned by a record company

The station is owned by the record company **Arcade**, famous for its compilations. The present studios are situated at Vijzelgracht 55 in the centre of Amsterdam. The premises are shared with the cable channels **JFK Jazzradio FM**, **Love Radio** and **Concert Radio**. JFK has recently got five small FM transmitters and is originally Jazz Radio that used 1395 kHz for a short period. The station was bought by Arcade and the jazz content minimized, which has caused a stir in the jazz circles. Oddly enough there is another JFK in Berlin but the stations have nothing to do with each other. The three cable channels are fully automated with all the music stored on a hard disc. The signals from all stations pass a central audio-processing before they are distributed digitally via satellite to the cable systems and transmitter sites. There are link antennas on the roof. Radio 10 Gold uses different models of Orban Optimod audio processors for AM and FM. This brand was first used in Europe by **Radio Caroline**. When I visited the premises technicians were evaluating a new digital compressor. The four channels employ a total of 60 persons. The stations use two floors in the building. Arcade is also operating the TV channel The Music Factory.

Radio 10 Gold uses horizontal programmes, which was introduced by Radio Veronica in the Netherlands. That means the same programme title is introduced all weekdays at the same time with the same presenter. On top of the hour until 19.00 the station brings news from ANP followed by a road report in co-operation with ANWB. **Jan Visser** is also presenting a daily weather report. Weekdays 05.30 – 07.00 the programme "Met DAF op weg" directed at truckers. **Tom Mulder** is on the air between 10.00 and 13.00 followed by **Peter Holland** until 16.00. There are also a few specialist programmes. Thursdays 19.00 – 22.00 local time the station presents "Radio 10 Gold Soul Train" with the best of Motown, Philadelphia, Stax and Atlantic. Wedesdays and Fridays 19.00 – 20.00 and weekends 18.00 – 19.00 there is "Superstar Special" with a detailed presentation of a certain act in each programme.

In August 1998 the music was still played from CDs but the station was turning to storing the music on a hard disc. It was already used for the commercials. The station knows its roots and keeps the friendly Dutch pop radio traditions. Part of the image is 50's jingles from **PAMS** in Dallas with new lyrics. The live studio is used around the clock and most programmes are transmitted live. Only exceptionally are pre-recorded presentation used. I was surprised that an oldie station like Radio 10 Gold had such a broad format that it included songs from the 80's and 90's. Tum Mulder explained that it is common with very broad formats in the Netherlands. For instance are youth channels such as **Veronica FM** and **Radio 538** using quite a lot of oldies. Radio 10 Gold has a strict playlist compiled in conjunction with Selector. Changes are only made seasonally. Summer songs are included during the beach season and Christmas songs are included in December. Other stations like **RTL Radio** – der Oldiesender are less sophisticated. On 1440 kHz you can hear Cliff Richard "Summer holiday" in December! Radio 10 Gold presents a lot of competitions. Prizes like cars, package tours and large sums are not unusual.

Contact with the listeners

Radio 10 Gold toured during the summer with a mobile scene on a trailer. I had the opportunity to see a performance in Almere with a competition arranged by a sponsor. On august 8, 1998 the station also broadcast for several hours from MV Fortuna off Scheveningen to mark 40 years of offshore radio in Europe, which started with **Radio Mercur** in the Sound between Malmö and Copenhagen. MV Fortuna is normally used for fishing trips but was during the early 70's used as a tender by Radio Caroline. The ship was also used by **FRC Holland** for popular trips to the radio ships. The legendary DJ Johnny Walker who broadcast on **Radio Caroline South** after the British MOA and later on RNI had left his present home in the Canary islands to join the broadcast. So did the former Radio Veronica director Bull Verwey.

Well-known presenters

Tom Mulder is since December 1992 programme director at Radio 10 Gold. He broadcasts all weekdays. He was born in Amsterdam and listened during the 50's to the Dutch programmes from **Radio Luxembourg**, during the 60's to Radio Veronica and the British off shore stations. After finishing his studies he joined Radio Veronica were he became a household name as Klaas Vaak. In 1972 he saw the end of offshore radio coming so he went to Hilversum. He presented a lot of programmes for **TROS**. In 1987 he moved to **Cable 1** which was the first commercial cable channel in the country. This station had to stop after a while, as the set-up of the company was politically sensitive. Then he worked for **RTL 4** before he early 1991 joined Radio 10 Gold.

Peter Holland was born near the coast and went to a hotel school before he in 1971 started at Radio Noordzee Internationaal. When the fun ended in 1974 he went to **VARA** and **NOS** in Hilversum. In 1989 he worked for **VOO** and in October 1991 he joined Radio 10 Gold.

These two programme hosts inspired **Dave Donkersvoor** who got a transistor radio in the 70's and listened intensively to Radio Veronica, RNI and Luxembourg. This led to him building an FM transmitter and later started the famous pirate station **Radio Keizerstad** in Nijmegen. Then followed six years at a station in Belgium. In 1989 he joined Radio 10 Gold.

Another DJ who had a similar inspiration is **Cees van den Brink** who worked at local stations before he was contacted and asked to send a demo tape that resulted in a job at Radio 10 Gold.

The Free Radio Contest 1998

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It was a highly interesting line-up of stations that Jonny Augustsson of SRS News and myself managed to recruit for this competition held during Easter last year. Among the highlights were the returns of **Sound of Sweden** and **Radio Mercury**. There was also a transatlantic station present, **WREC**, which was one of the more difficult stations that sifted out the skillful DX-ers from the average listener.

Not as many contestants participated (only 11 out of 17 entries fulfilled the contest) as we had hoped for and one of the reasons for this was the insufficient advertising from our side. We hope to improve this year.

Before we have a look on the results, I'll give you a résumé of all the stations' broadcasts:

Radio Fusion International (RFI) from Sweden, most well-known for its 48 metre transmissions, dusted off the old 40 W 76 metre band transmitter and started off the competition on Saturday night, the 11th of April. The reception was only poor to fair, but most competitors managed to tune in. 8 out of 11 (73%) correct reports gives a station point of 101 – 73 = **28**.

WREC was of decisive importance to the competition and only three of the contestants received this US station. The show had rock music by Metallica and Beastie Boys, advertisement for the ACE as well as an announcement of the Free Radio Contest. Station points: **74**.

Transatlantic Radio (TAR) was the station that put our contest rules to a real test. As a matter of fact, it revealed a big loophole. Harry of TAR was supposed to broadcast on Sunday April 12th on 48 m between 7–8 UTC, but for some strange reason he thought he shouldn't appear on Easter Sunday, but on Easter Monday which he also did. The contest rules say that a station will be excluded if it doesn't appear on the day planned in the station schedule. So we first decided to cancel the station. Now, one contestant reported the station on 76 metres later in the afternoon (at 17.18–17.38 UTC on 3940 kHz), and according to the contest rules, we had to approve this report. However, all reports for the Easter Monday broadcast received 0 points. Even if we would have cancelled TAR, it hadn't affected the final rankings. However, we feel this scenario wasn't really fair to the contestants that heard the Monday broadcast and so we will tighten up the contest rules for this year's competition. Station points: **92**.

Radio New World was the only station reported by all contestants! It was quite an odd programme with folk music from Africa and other funny features, aired on both 6260 and 9240 kHz. **1** station point.

Sound of Sweden was perhaps the most spectacular return of a station that was one of the 'big' stations back in the 70's. I must admit that I almost got tears in my eyes when I heard Mr. Glenn Roberts playing his old vinyl records again for the first time in 14 years! A very enjoyable show and the fifth person in the final standings will receive a copy of the show on CD! 7 had correct reports of SOS. The station appeared on 6252 kHz and not on 6260 kHz according to the preliminary schedule. Station points: **37**.

Radio Mercury appeared on quite an odd frequency, 6310 kHz (also reported in the UK on 3910 kHz). This, plus the fact that the 500 W tx never came into use but only a 40 W tx, made quite a few people to believe that the station failed to come on the air. I heard the station myself with a weak signal, but only after having called the operators and being told the frequency in use. The programme featured a potted story on how the station started back in 1978 by Stuart Clark and Jack Russell, plus a few recording cuts from the same period. Station points: **65**.

Radio Titanic International proved to be another difficult task, as the station neither appeared on the expected time, nor the expected frequency 6400 kHz. The broadcast went out at 8.00 UTC in the morning on 6275 kHz, and two of the German contestants reported fair to good signal strength. Station points: **83**.

Radio Pandora was the first station on Easter Monday and came up on 6200 kHz. A few of our contestants missed this, but two of them were "saved" by the fact that Pandora also was heard a brief moment on 6295 kHz! Station points: **37**.

Voice of Free Radio came on the air with only a few watts of power on 6285 kHz and turned out to be the most difficult challenge to catch. In fact, none of the contestants heard the station, although two of them claimed to have done so. Both proved to be fake reports! I really hope we will not have to deal with such reports in the next competition! Since nobody heard the station, it is withdrawn from the final result table.

Wrekin Radio International had splendid reception all day on 12256 kHz in central Europe and Scandinavia, and was an easy task for all participants in these areas. Due to long-skip conditions however, the signals were very weak in Great Britain and so the station was of great disadvantage for our two British participants. One of them managed to get one programme details during a "fade-up", though, and that was the difference between getting 2nd and 4th in the final ratings. Station points: **37**. Well, now let's reveal the results of the competition:

Results and final standings

Rank./Cont.	RFI	WREC	TAR	RNW	SOS	RM	RTI	RP	WRI	Tot.
1. R. Brandt	28+4	74+4	92+4	1+4	37+4	-	83+4	37+0	-	376
2. W. Phillips	28+3	74+3	-	1+4	-	65+4	-	37+4	37+0	260
3. K.S.Salvesen	28+4	-	-	1+4	37+4	65+4	-	37+4	37+4	229
4. C. Olsson	28+4	-	-	1+4	37+4	65+0	0	37+4	37+4	225
5. N. Sharpe	28+4	74+4	-	1+4	-	65+4	-	37+4	-	197
6. B. Quaeck	-	-	-	1+4	-	-	83+4	37+0	-	129
7. L. Andersson	-	-	-	1+4	37+4	-	-	37+4	37+4	128
8. K. Winter	28+1	0	0	1+4	37+1	0	0	0	37+4	113
9. T. Reintam	-	-	-	1+4	37+4	-	-	-	37+4	87
10. W.Shauer.	28+4	-	0	1+4	37+4	-	-	0	0	78
11. K. Köhler	28+0	-	-	1+4	-	-	-	-	37+4	74

Not surprisingly, the prominent German DX-er **Rainer Brandt** took a runaway victory, despite the fact that he missed both Radio Mercury and Wrekin Radio International. He would have won the competition even if Transatlantic Radio had been cancelled, so I hope there will be no hard feelings about the fact that we had to stick with the rules and approve his report on TAR. After Rainer, it was rather tight between four DX-ers, Will Phillips and Nick Sharpe in UK, Kai

Salve Salvesen of Norway and Claes Olsson in Sweden. Will was a cut above and grabbed the second place. Then only four points between Kai and Claes, but Kai became the bronze medallist. And then Nick Sharpe on fifth place.

Prizes

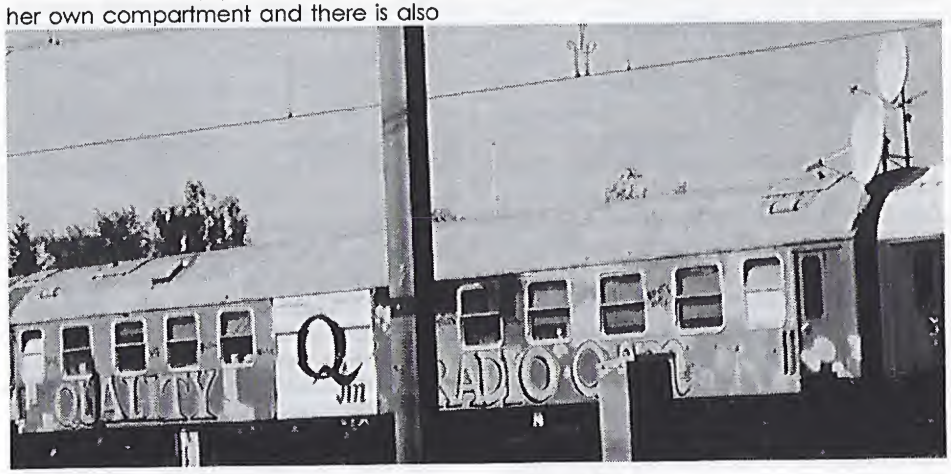
1. Loop antenna, goes to Rainer Brandt, Germany.
2. Vogelfreies Radio by Bjoern Quaeck, goes to Will Phillips, UK.
3. Annual subscription to SRS News, goes to Kai Salve Salvesen, Norway.
4. Annual subscription to Pirate Connection, goes to Claes Olsson, Sweden.
5. CD recording of Sound of Sweden's Easter broadcast, goes to Nick Sharpe.

We also drew lots for another copy of the SOS-recording...waiting for my computer... voilà...this prize goes to Thomas Reintam, Sweden! Congrats to all winners, and especially our winner Rainer Brandt. Hope you will have good use of the loop.

Finally, I just want to say a big thank you to all contestants and for the good co-operation with the participating stations! We will make this year's competition even better and even more exciting, believe me (details in will be published in PC #20)! Also thanks for the comments about the competition from Bjoern Quaeck. I will certainly take your ideas into account. One of his thoughts were to raffle some of the finest prizes, so that even DX-ers with less possibilities to be in the top rankings (due to little space for aerials, etc.) have as much chance to win the loop or whatever the first prize will be this year. An advertisement for this year's Easter competition is included in the mag and you will also be able to hear the competition promo jingles in the next few months over some of the Free Radio stations.

Continued from p. 37

train. The station also gets external help with PR etc. Every presenter has his or her own compartment and there is also a small kitchen for the important coffeemaker.



My participation in the Free Radio Contest

Radio Torenvalk
P.O. Box 94
7038 ZH Zeddam
THE NETHERLANDS

During Easter the annual Free Radio Contest 1998 was due to take place and I was scheduled for Sunday the 12th to put in the air a programme for **Radio New World**. The programme was to be aired from 8.00 until 9.00 UTC on two frequencies simultaneously. I was going to broadcast on 6260 kHz and my friend Jos was going to broadcast on 9241 kHz. These two frequencies, situated on two different shortwave bands (i.e. 48 and 31 metres), were to cover the better part of Europe and probably beyond.

At 6.00 local time (4 UTC) I went up from bed and that wasn't too confortable. The main reason why I got up so early was my intention to come in the air as soon as 6.00 UTC and keep the frequency occupied with a programme from **Radio Torenvalk** until the New World programme would commence. I expected the 48 metre band to be very crowded during Easter.

I reckoned that a quick breakfast and the usual trip of about 25 minutes to the studio would be no problem. I carefully checked that I hadn't forgotten any of the important things like crystals and tapes. At 7.15 local time I stepped into my car and this was the moment that good luck abandoned me because my car wouldn't start at all.

My knowledge of radios is by far bigger than that of car engines, so after 15 minutes of trying to get the cursed thing to work and checking several wires I gave up. Who can you call on a Sunday morning at half past seven without waking them up? I decided to wait at least for one hour and meanwhile listened to the early birds that had already entered the 48 metre band and prayed for a clear 6260 kHz channel, if I ever would reach to my studio.

At 9.00 local time Jos from **Radio Tonair** called me and I told him about my car problems. He said he would jump in his car and pick me up and 10 minutes later he arrived at my home. Now a car drive followed that I will not easily forget. When you are broadcasting on the 48 metre band you are in fact breaking the law, but the way that Jos was driving to my studio was really criminal, like taking a trip in the Space Mountain on a public road. Luckily most police-men were still at sleep.

D. P. R. S.
Dutch Pirate Radio Service
12 Dorman Road
Preston PR2 6AS
England

I arrived in my studio 10 minutes later and this left me even some time to put out a short Radio Torenvalk show. Jos arrived some 15 minutes later in his studio, just in time for his broadcast on 9240 kHz. The Radio New World programmes were aired as planned and reception was quite fair on both the 31 and the 48 metre band.

So you see guys, everybody must make an effort to keep the transmitter at work and to make sure the programmes will be put in the air. Thanks to my friend Jos this time, everything could take place as planned.

It really was worth every drop of sweat and gasoline and I hope a lot of listeners have enjoyed our crazy shows.

AN ALTERNATIVE DUTCH STATION
Q Radio

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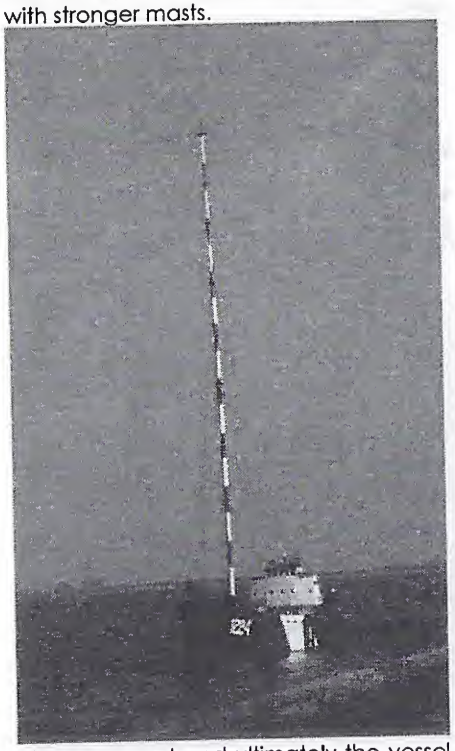
During the summer (at least according to the calendar) of 1998 I had the pleasure to visit some interesting Dutch stations. The most original channel is Q Radio with studios and offices in former East German railway cars on a side track at Zütphen railway station in the east of the Netherlands and broadcasting on 1224 kHz from MV Communicator, formerly the home of Laser 558 in the Northsea. The ship is moored at Trintelhaven on the border between Enkhuizen and Lelystad. After use for **Laser 558** and the short-lived Laser Hot Hits the ship went to Portugal to be fitted with stronger masts.



Money run out and ultimately the vessel was purchased by the Dutch cable radio station **Holland FM** which had got a licence for a number of AM transmitters. Later **Veronica Omroep Organitie** left the state radio system in Hilversum to restart as a commercial broadcaster. One of the first steps was to buy the **Communicator** and restart as **Hit Radio 1224** and later **Hit Radio Veronica**. The station originally broadcast from ships between 1960 and 1974. The station also opened a relay station in Rotterdam on 828 kHz. Due to very low ratings, below 1 per cent, Veronica pressed for a FM licence that was granted at the beginning of 1998. The Rotterdam transmitter was transferred to **Arrow Classic Rock** and **Q FM** took over MV Communicator.

Started as Radio London

Q FM was from the beginning inspired by off shore radio as the original name of the station was Radio London, using the classic jingles from this 60's station, which by many is considered the best off shore station ever. From the start the Dutch station broadcast on cable and satellite with music and features about environment and human rights. Ironically one of the railway cars was the sleeping car of the former East German dictator Erich Honnecker. Most of the luxury interior of this car has been saved and it is used as offices for the station management. Later the station changed name to Quality FM and is now known as Q Radio.

Don't expect Top 40 records on 1224 kHz. Q Radio features a lot of blues, R & B, soul, reggae, African, Latin, Caribbean and world music. Sundays 13.00 – 19.00 local time the station airs Fab 40, which is the most unusual chart in the country. The programme feature mainly African, Latin and Caribbean music. Weekdays between 20.00 and 22.00 local time there are a number of programmes featuring the same type of music.

The power on 1224 kHz is 50 kW during daylight hours and 25 kW during the night. The transmitter on board MV Communicator, which is registered in Rotterdam, is supplied by **NOZEMA**. This is the Dutch state transmitter rental company which runs all major transmitters in the country. The mast is 59.8 metres high and is in fact two shorter masts put together. These were originally intended for the ship in the mid 80's, when the balloon antenna was abandoned but impounded by British authorities in Kent. Later when the ship went to Portugal the operators managed to buy them from a junkyard!

During the summer reports came that the ship was sailing to the port of Almere close to Amsterdam. This has so far not been carried out. The intention was to move the ship to a port easily accessed by the public and with live broadcasts from studios onboard. Then the railway cars would be abandoned. The reports also suggested a new colour scheme on the hull of the radio ship. The move must be carried out before October, as the water level is too low during winter. But there have also been reports of the ship being put up for sale and would be replaced by a 100 kW transmitter at Hoogezand. If not sold to somebody interested in a pirate radio museum it is likely the ship will be scrapped. The reason is the great amount of concrete poured into the hull as a counterweight for the antennas, which makes the vessel hard to use for any other purpose. There are also very low ratings for the station with a market share of 0.0%, compared with **Sky Radio** with 14.4%, **Radio 10 Gold** with 9.5%, **Radio 538** with 7.1%, **Noordzee FMI** with 6.7 %, **Veronica FM** with 4.1 % and **Arrow Classic Rock** 0.6 %.

Visitors welcome

The presenter **Kim van Lendt** was alone running the live programme and taking telephone calls when I visited the station a Sunday. The live studio is fitted with two Denon DN-650F professional CD decks, a double DAT player, two Denon Minidisc players and a Belaudio mixing console.

To the left was a rack with amplifiers and sound processors for the signal sent to the cable nets. The studio was fitted into a compartment with amplifiers lying on top of a luggage rack. The studio also had a Yamaha cassette deck, which was no longer in use as the station has dropped the use of cassettes. Minidiscs are used for fillers, promos and music.

All programmes are transmitted live. Only features like interviews and information is recorded and edited in advance. The station gets promotional records from several record companies, also from foreign companies. This type of music (afro, souca etc) are not big sellers in the Netherlands.

The Dutch railway board gives the station information about disturbances in the railway service. This is the only station supplied with this information. A total of twenty persons work aboard the

Continued on page 34.

The Christmas Holidays – Day by Day

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Christmas is when Free Radio climaxes on the shortwave band. These days also a kind of celebration and tribute to all brave pirate stations that still fight for the right for free speech and free airwaves. As long as I have been listening to pirate radio (for 15 years), tuning in to the 48 metre band, which is like a big box of assorted chocolates, has been an almost holy tradition to me. Some stations are brand-new, some only emerge on Christmas Day and most of the other ones bring special Christmas programmes. So I do hope you didn't leave this out and if you did, I hope you will realise what you are missing and invent a good excuse for statying away from the social family activities in connection with this holiday. I will here give you a round-up of some of the most interesting loggings I made during Christmas.

Christmas Eve, December 24th

Usually doesn't show much activities, so I didn't spend much time listening, really. During the evening, I enjoyed some time listening to **Laser Hot Hits** who played a number of hits from the 80's on their usual frequency 6220 kHz.

Christmas Day December 25th

Waking up on the morning of a Christmas Day is really something special. It's itching all over and a cold shiver runs down your back. It's the year's big day for the Free Radio stations on shortwave and the band is about to explode. You don't feel calm until you have seated yourself in front of your radio set and tuned the band back and forth a couple of times. Christmas Day proved to be very good condition-wise this year and the signals kept up well until late lunch time. Among the "Christmas sweets" were **Superclan Radio** with Herbie The Fish – a well-known figure in Free Radio that was featured in Pirate Connection #12! Knock on wood, the guy behaved well this time (having his old, controversial station **XMAS** in mind) and aired a decent programme. Even an address was announced: Box 343, 6900 AH Zevenaar in The Netherlands. **Radio Arena** (6261 and 6270 kHz), also from the Netherlands, have only been present on Christmas Day the last couple of years and this year was no exception! Pleasant music, like Simon&Garfunkel was played, sandwiched with very old announcements in different languages, e.g. Finnish. What a classic, eh? Another "Santa" for Christmas was Santa himself! That is, the **Santa Claus Overdrive**! This station struck back once again on 6255 kHz with very old Christmas songs from the Stone Age well, 30's, 40's and 50's to be more specific...) and Santa pitied himself over the fact that his private model, Jenny McCarthy, wasn't sitting in his lap this Christmas Day. I guess she's better payed off somewhere else! Anyway, as a comfort he administered corporal punishment to "sugar junkie" children! The Finns seem to be gaining ground again! A new station was **Scandinavian Lighthouse** on 6250 kHz, with very weak signal here though. Later on the day, this station had a QSO with another Finnish station called **Ei Mistään Kotoisin**, which means Radio From Nowhere. This station was also heard on 6232 kHz with old recordings of Radio Urbino! Let's hope our neighbours will prove to us that this was more than just a one-off appearance! **LaserNet** was a new acquaintance to me on 6262 kHz. The station relayed a local station from Indianapolis, by the use of Internet! More stations were relayed according to SRS News. An address was given out as Box 40185, 6504 AD Nijmegen, The Netherland. E-mail: lasernet@telekabel.nl.

Other stations noted: **Radio Free London** (5805), **Radio Fusion Int'l** (6200), **Radio Perfekt** (6200), **Radio Marabu** (6210), **Radio Mi Amigo Int'l** (6235), **Radio Dr. Tim** (6235), **Radio Nordzee** (6245), **Radio Orion** (6257), **AL Int'l** (6270) and **Farmers** (6283).

Boxing Day, December 26th

I spent the night with some 76 metre DX-ing and first heard **Radio Benelux** from Germany and then **Radio Blackbeard** from England, both stations on 3905 kHz. **Radio Borderhunter** was hitting the band half an hour past midnight and sent greetings to Spacemand and his "Space Lady". When is this guy going to do anything about his poor modulation? The peak of the night was of courses **Live Wire Radio** who entertained the audience a few hours into the night. The signal was extremely good and even reached across the Atlantic. Carl Lexington from Massachusetts in USA called in during the program and gave his reception report. This was great news to Bill of course, even if he hardly made any leap for joy. I guess he's getting used to receiving report from "over there" once in a while. During the morning hours, the activities were sparing compared with Christmas Day, and at the same time the conditions were slightly worse. To me, the most interesting loggings were the new German **Free Radio Network** (6260 kHz) with address in Merseburg, **Radio Iris Int'l** (6235 kHz), British **UK Radio** (6266 kHz), the Dutchies **Radio Bandonica** (6275 kHz) and **Radio Torenvalk** (6299 kHz). The latter one initiated a QSO on the frequency after his programme and among the joining stations **Pionier**, **Crazy Wave Radio**, **807**, **Radio Fusion Int'l** and **Toto**.

Sunday, December 27th

The fourth "pirate day" in a row! But really, we could have lived without it. The conditions had dramatically deteriorated and I guess we should thank the weather gods that they didn't chose to execute such conditions two days earlier! **FRS Holland** (6240 kHz) aired their postponed Christmas programme that was originally intended to be aired one week earlier. Too bad that didn't materialise, because the signal was far from good! **Spaceman** (6260 kHz) on the contrary had a mastodontal signal, but with a power of what I would guess be at least 1 kW, conditions are hardly an issue any longer! I called in to the number that was given during the show and had a nice talk with Anna, the Space Lady. Otherwise, not much: **RFL** (5805), **Union Radio** (6200), **Free Radio Network** (6220) and **AL Int'l** (6270).

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crazy Thoughts

...and the first pictures from Offshore '98!

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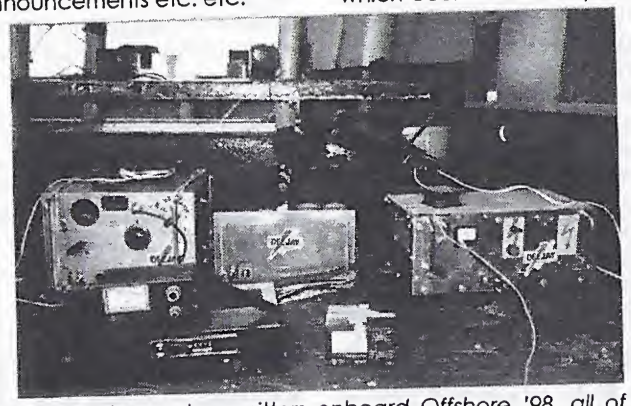
Hi dear listeners! Welcome back here on Pirate Connection. Nice to see that this mag is still existing although the breaks among the issues becoming longer and longer. But what is there to tell you? The land-based scene in Germany keeps quit, not much is going on. Unfortunately the few active stations are suffering from increased PTT activity. **Radio Nordsee** from Germany got caught by officials on Easter Monday, a fact to underline: Did not we think all (in Germany) that THEY are not working on holidays??? So the active part of the scene is getting smaller and smaller, but luckily we have the inactive part living and supporting the free radio scene by rumours and announcements etc. etc.

If you are reading the German Free Radio "mag" you might think nearly every weekend the scene is on air and it must be hard to find any free space on the bands. The reality is a different: nothing is going on. The usual active part (**Dr. Tim, Perfekt, Benelux**) are transmitting, Nordsee got busted and my station keeps quite due to change of location. But what the hell are doing all the other Free Radio "freaks"? Telling me on a meeting for example it would be no problem to come on air immediately, or doing fake programmes and starting propaganda tapes against the few active stations, mainly against BNL and CWR. So far so good, we kept quiet so far in remembering some old discussions were going on in the past (some called it the "German Free Radio war"). Due to the fake programmes offending the active part we decided in cooperation with our Level 48 stations to search for the producers and supporters of this kind of "Free Radio" as it is destroying more than increasing the "quality" of the scene. After investigating and collecting evidences we finally found the editor of this fakes. We kept quiet to avoid a public "discussion" so far, but unfortunately this guy does not have any interest in an internal meeting, which could solve the problems. It is a pity to see that on one hand he always claimed in front of readers of his columns in the above mentioned mag to be an apostle of moral in German Free Radio, but on the other hand keeps on working on destroying the base. Probably his way to compensate his lack of ability in running a Free Radio station with own equipment? And who can be more influenced in Free Radio things than you dear listener? Anyway – if you like to have more info just drop a line to Benelux or me. Would be also interesting to have your opinion. The Merchweiler meeting from 30th July to 1st August might be a good place to get directly in contact with you dear listener. So if you find the time come to this camp, it might be the last event there as well.



The shortwave transmitters onboard Offshore '98, all of which were built by the Level 48 crew member Radio Torenvalk.

But back to the start of this column. What is going on in general: The international contacts keep on running our hobby. **Level 48** was back earlier this year, showing the international cooperation between Europe's Free Radio. Nice to see that also the listeners supported this by calling in from dusk till dawn all over the weekend.

The antenna system on bord of the MV Morningstar.

When I was in Italy I met one of the now most fanatic Free Radio operator: Steve of SWRS. It was unbelievable to see how contacts were met around the whole globe and to see how the signals came down in parts of the world other station can only dream of. And it is really more amazing when I am thinking back of the start of everything there. I am sure that no one of us could think about the coming feedback on the day we put up the antennas and installed the equipment. It is also nice to see in my opinion that Steve makes it possible to receive stations from whole America, which gives a good opportunity to have a closer view to their way of doing the hobby. In which mode the broadcast will be aired depends also from difference among the audience of both side of the pond, one side prefers AM (or better is used to have AM quality) the other side only knows SSB. Both modes have advantages, but the important point is that now both modes are known here in Europe (mainly in Germany) to a larger audience than in former times. Also this keeps on inventing something new which we all need.

Another miracle was the **Offshore '98** project which was finally on air now over Easter. Some German and Dutch offshore freaks planned this project nearly for years and also helped to stop the offshore nostalgia of former years a bit. It was really nice to see that there are still some people who are *doing* something instead of talking, talking, talking... (although BNL and me never thought to become offshore stations!!☺). As the whole story will be published soon in the final issue of German Free Radio News, here are just some pictures taken onboard of the **MV Morningstar** by Jens Martin of Radio Benelux and me. And this should be all for this time, due to lack of time (yes! Also Chris Ise suffers now on this major problem of our hobby) more stories and more crazy thoughts in the coming issues of this magazine. Keep on doing the great work Stefan! And *you* keep on listening and supporting the Free Radio stations!

Reasons to be cheerful

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It is often being written that the shortwave scene isn't as interesting as it was in the late 70's, that nothing much happens and that Free Radio as a whole has lost its way. If you look back at the number of hobbyist magazines that are now produced to what was being sold 15 years ago this is unquestionably true. Whilst I wouldn't say there are any less stations putting out programmes that are worth listening to. On hours, there is activity at times other than Sunday mornings and the overall problems with the authorities do seem to be diminishing.

John Campbell, a well-known supporter of the shortwave pirates and a contributor to "Media Network", during a feature in February mentioned that he felt the European shortwave scene has developed a "monotone style" whilst the North American pirates had more variety, humour and invention. Although I agree with John to a large extent I do feel that the European scene has quite a few strong personalities, **Andy Walker** (RFL) and **Mike Wilson** (Orion) spring to mind. There are far more stations over here and they broadcast with proper AM, not the dreadful SSB mode, so perhaps it's not all bad.

It could be that the real death of pirate radio will not be apathy or government raids but a lack of any suitable medium to transmit on. For example in London, the FM pirates used to have quite a large selection of bandwidth to choose from which would give clear signals across the capital, now all number of commercial stations have been licenced leaving far fewer clear channels. This, and of course many other factors, leads to all sorts of problems which can turn out to be quite nasty.

I do of course rate shortwave operators as having more sense that to attack each other with baseball bats, but there does exist the very real possibility that remaining free shortwave spectrum will be encroached upon, and it is in fact happening now in a number of guises:

Legal broadcasters have been after more channels for many years, the extension of the 49 metre band to 6.3 MHz being one option.

The number of commercial teletype stations, maritime ship to shore and other utility users, which in theory should be decreasing, seems to be on the increase. Isn't it quite staggering when compared with technologies that are available now such as digital satellite links and the Internet that something as antiquated and unreliable as shortwave radio is still in demand?

Lastly it could be that the pirates are facing a problem from the enemy within. This past weekend for example I could hear one licenced broadcaster with an illicit relay from Eire (U.C.B. 6200 kHz), Laser Hot Hits on *three* different channels, again being relayed from Ireland, and the Dutch Farmers who show a complete disregard for any user within 20 kHz of their signal. The situation is as bad on 76 metres where there are far too many Dutch operators that concentrate more on power and less on programming.

This means that the smaller or less regular operators are pushed out of band or off the air, all for a few idiots who lack any imagination or real understanding of the pirate scene.

On a more positive note the hobby radio stations tat operate on shortwave do still make a pleasant change from repetitive, profit oriented licenced stations available on FM or mediumwave. The unpredictability of who is going to be on the air makes it exciting for the shortwave listener, and for the operator the fact that just about anyone could be listening can provide a lot of the fun in broadcasting.

Last year I manned a telephone line for one station operating late at night on 76 metres. I spoke to many people who I'd never heard mentioned on the air – "I've been listening for years but I've never written in" was a typical response. I had one call from a radio amateur who was listening out for the American HAMs who operate up to 4 MHz. Others have had calls from BBC engineers as well as "old timers" of the Free Radio scene who still listen occasionally.

At the time of writing (late March) I've been enjoying the programmes from **Radio Pandora**, operator Steve St. John always presents an entertaining show. **Radio Free London** continue to be the highest profile UK station, still managing to transmit every fortnight on the clear 5805 channel. A harder catch is the modestly powered **Radio Armadillo** who transmit late at night on 76 metres (specifically 3920 or 3947 kHz). He often can be heard relaying the late night Mike Wilson Shows from **UK Radio**'s FM outlet, which can often prove to be highly amusing.

Finally I ought to put a plug in for my own station **XTC** which should be making the odd appearance or two over the next few months. Listener response has been good recently, so some people at least must be enjoying the shows! Bye for now.

Free Radio Meeting 2000

It's time to book your calendar for another great Free Radio Meeting in Merchweiler, in south-west Germany.

The meeting takes place from Friday July 30th to Sunday August 1st and is arranged by the Shortwave Listeners Club Saar (SWLCS). Lots of pirates and other representatives of Free Radio will be there. Come down and meet Free Radio fames such as Crazy Wave Radio, Radio Torenvalk, Spaceman, Radio Benelux and many more. Of course, we at Pirate Connection will also be there! And don't miss the opportunity to make live radio shows in the "Free Radio tent"!

For more information, call the main man of SWLCS, Peter Hell, on +49 6825 8380 (use German language).